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A

PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN LIBERTY.

By ANTHONY COLLINS, Esq.

REPUBLISHED WITH A

PREFACE,

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L.L.D. F.R.S.

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A

PREFACE,

BY THE

EDITOR.

THE ſubject of *philoſophical liberty and neceſſity* having engaged much of the public attention, many perſons have wiſhed to ſee this treatiſe of Mr. Collins; but the copies being now become very ſcarce, few have been able to procure it. On this account, at the requeſt of ſeveral perſons, I have been induced to republiſh it, making uſe of the *third edition*, printed in 1735, which, as far as I know, was the laſt.

The great merit of this piece conſiſts in its conciſeneſs, its clearneſs, and its being the firſt regular treatiſe on the ſubject. Mr. Hobbes, I am ſtill of opinion, was the firſt who, in this, or any other country, rightly underſtood, and clearly

ſtated, the argument; but he wrote nothing *ſyſtematical*, and conſequently nothing that could be of much uſe to a ſtudent. For this purpoſe this treatiſe of Collins is excellent; there being few topics in the whole compaſs of the argument, which he has not touched upon; and being *methodical*, it is valuable as an *elementary treatiſe*.

My own work I have called *An Illuſtration of the Doctrine of Neceſſity*, having contented myſelf with explaining ſuch of the arguments as appeared to me to have been miſunderſtood, though I was led before I had done, to treat more or leſs largely, of almoſt every thing that had been advanced relating to it, and I flatter myſelf that I have thrown ſome new light upon it. Dr. Hartley's ſections on *the mechaniſm of the mind*, are indeed moſt excellent for their conciſeneſs and clearneſs, beyond any thing in our language, or, I believe, in any other; but they are too ſhort for the purpoſe of the young metaphyſician. *Edwards's treatiſe on free-will*, though a moſt maſterly performance, is in the extreme of

of diffuſeneſs; and in many caſes an argument is better underſtood by being expreſſed in few words.

The article with reſpect to which this treatiſe of Collins, and indeed every thing elſe that I have yet ſeen on the ſubject, except Dr. Hartley's, is moſt defective, is that which relates to moral ſentiment, the foundation of praiſe or blame, and the nature of *accountableneſs*, which I have therefore more particularly conſidered in my *Illuſtration* of the doctrine, in my *Correſpondence with Dr. Price*, and my *Letters to Mr. Palmer*, to which I have nothing to add.

The only ſeeming advantage of thoſe who oppoſe the doctrine of neceſſity, ariſes from the conſideration of the introduction of moral evil, and the connexion that it has with ſuffering. But if the doctrine of *preſcience* be allowed (which every believer in revelation *muſt* do, and without which there could be no proper government of the world at all) whatever be the conſequence of *appointment*, will alſo be the conſequence of *permiſſion*. If good would not ultimately ariſe from any kind or degree of evil,

natural or moral, a good being would not permit it; and if good would neceſſarily ariſe from it, he would be juſtified in appointing it, being the proper and neceſſary means to a valuable end.

It is likewiſe ſaid, and with great plauſibility, that there is no foundation for *praiſe or blame*, *merit or demerit*, upon the doctrine of neceſſity. But if the proper definition of philoſophical liberty be attended to, even the common idea of praiſe or blame will be perceived to be as incompatible with *it*, as with the doctrine of *neceſſity*. For with what reaſon would any perſon be praiſed or blamed for an action which aroſe from no proper motive, but an arbitrary determination of the will, independent of *motive*, and conſequently of *fixed principle*. And if, without attending to the popular idea of praiſe or blame, merit or demerit, we only conſider the effect of annexing pleaſing conſequences to what we call *virtue*, and unpleaſing ones to what we term *vice*, we ſhall ſee that ſuch a ſyſtem of government, with reſpect to beings influenced by motives, will actually

actually tend to produce virtue, by ſupplying ſufficient motives to the practice of it. And what elſe is the object and end of any wiſe and righteous government; the virtue of intelligent and ſocial creatures, being neceſſarily connected with their happineſs?

If perſons have ſtrength of mind not to be frightened by *names*, and be capable of attending to *things* only, the ſtrongeſt objections to the doctrine of neceſſity will not affect them. If they be unequal to this, they had better deſiſt from the conſideration of the ſubject, and content themſelves with popular ideas, and popular language. Only let them ceaſe to cenſure what they do not underſtand, and what they ſee does no real harm.

Theſe remarks I have thought proper to prefix to this treatiſe, becauſe the ſubject of them is of particular importance, being the foundation of much popular declamation againſt the doctrine of neceſſity, and ſuch as is acknowledged not to be eaſily

anſwered to the ſatisfaction of a common reader; and becauſe it has not been ſufficiently conſidered by Mr. Collins. Mr. Hume, and other unbelievers, ſeem willing to abandon the doctrine, without concern, to any immoral conſequences that licentious perſons may be diſpoſed to draw from it, and chriſtian metaphyſicians have ſometimes appeared to have been afraid of this objection to their doctrine, and willing to evade the force of it. This, however, has not been objected to *my* writings on the ſubject. I have acknowledged every conſequence in its fulleſt extent, and in the ſtrongeſt terms; and yet I flatter myſelf that the doctrine, with all its conſequences, has appeared to be highly favourable to virtue, in minds properly enlarged; and weak minds, diſpoſed to licentiouſneſs, do not ſtand in need of the doctrine of philoſophical neceſſity, to reconcile to themſelves any gratifications to which they are on other accounts ſtrongly impelled.

When young neceſſarians, who wiſh to prolong their lives, ſhall neglect the neceſſary means of preſerving

ſerving them, by taking wholeſome food or poiſon promiſcuouſly; or when they ſhall careleſsly throw themſelves down precipices, or walk indifferently where there is danger, and where there is none, I ſhall then acknowledge that the doctrine of neceſſity, ſimply conſidered, has, indeed, dangerous conſequences. But if neceſſarians, whether virtuouſly or viciouſly diſpoſed, take the ſame care of themſelves in theſe reſpects, as other people do, I ſhall ſay that, if they do not pay the ſame rational attention to their conduct in a moral reſpect, ſo as to guard againſt inconveniencies equally foreſeen, whatever elſe be the cauſe, their inattention and miſconduct did not ariſe from their being believers in the doctrine of neceſſity.

I would farther obſerve, that Mr. Collins takes it for granted (which I believe was true in his time) that the advocates for philoſophical liberty admitted that all brutes were mere machines, neceſſarily impelled by their appetites and paſſions. But for ſome time paſt, theſe writers have been compelled by the ſimilarity of the two caſes, to admit that brutes

brutes have the ſame power of choice with men, and that if *choice*, as ſuch, be free from neceſſity in men, it is no leſs ſo in brutes. For the ſame reaſon they have alſo been compelled to acknowledge, that if men be animated by an immaterial, and naturally immortal principle, called a *ſoul*, brutes alſo have ſuch ſouls; and therefore if they do not ſurvive death, it muſt be owing to an expreſs volition on the part of the Diety to *annihilate* their immortal ſouls.

Mr. Collins alſo ſuppoſes that the *fate* of the ancient philoſophers, and the *predeſtination* of mahometan and chriſtian divines, was the ſame thing with the modern doctrine of *philoſophical neceſſity*; whereas they were things of a very different nature, as I have obſerved in my writings on the ſubject. Till of late the neceſſary connexion of events and their cauſes, when thoſe cauſes were the voluntary actions of men, was not ſufficiently attended to. The fatuliſt, and the predeſtinarian, both admitted freedom of choice in common things, but they imagined that, with reſpect to thoſe particular events which were *deſtined* to take place, human volitions would either

either be ſupernaturally over-ruled, or that the events would take place in ſome other manner, independently of their volitions.

It has been unfortunate for the doctrine of neceſſity, that ſome of its firſt and ableſt defenders were either unbelievers in chriſtianity, or at leaſt generally conſidered as ſuch. This was the caſe with Mr. Hobbes in an early period of the buſineſs, of Mr. Hume in a later, and alſo of Mr. Collins who came between them. Mr. Collins was the friend and correſpondent of Mr. Locke, who had a high opinion of him. He was a man of irreproachable morals, and a moſt excellent magiſtrate; but he ſaw in a ſtrong light the abſurdity of the eſtabliſhed ſyſtem, and the freedom of his publications having given much offence to the clergy, he was irritated by their oppoſition to him; and from this cauſe it is very poſſible he might be inſtigated to throw as many difficulties in their way as he could, whether he was an unbeliever or not.

His writings on the ſubject of *prophecy* have certainly occaſioned more real difficulty to the friends of revelation

revelation, than all the other writings of unbelievers at home or abroad; and it is the opinion of many, that they have not yet been properly anſwered. I do not indeed ſee how Mr. Collins's writings on this ſubject can be anſwered, ſo long as we retain the idea of the univerſal infallibility of the apoſtles, or of Chriſt himſelf. But if we admit that they had no particular inſtruction from above in the *interpretation of ſcripture* (which, as they no where *ſay* that they had, we have no occaſion to ſuppoſe) and that, with the prejudices common to all Jews of that age, they were led to ſuppoſe more paſſages in their ſcriptures to relate to the Meſſiah, than really did ſo, we may make ourſelves perfectly eaſy on the ſubject; becauſe the *teſtimony* of the apoſtles to the leading facts in the Goſpel Hiſtory, ſuch as the miracles, the death, and the reſurrection of Chriſt, on the truth of which alone our belief of chriſtianity properly reſts, ſtands unimpeached by any inſtances of their miſtakes in point of *judgment*. They were plain honeſt men, incapable of impoſing upon the world what they know to be falſe, and indeed unable to do ſo, if they had been capable of intending it.

In

In fact, the reception that was given to chriſtianity at the firſt promulgation of it, eſpecially conſidering how highly intereſted both the friends and the enemies of it were to find out the truth, is its proper proof. The witneſſes of the facts were not the apoſtles only, the evangeliſts, and other writers, whoſe works are now come down to us, but *the age* itſelf. In like manner, it is not on the authority of Rapin only, or that of all the other Engliſh hiſtorians of his time, put together, that we believe the hiſtory of the *revolution* under King William: but becauſe we perceive by the reception which their writings met with, that it was the belief of the age, which would have rejected their hiſtories if they had not been narratives of well known facts; and alſo becauſe all other ſubſequent events, and thoſe of our own times, imply the truth of it.

But though the primitive chriſtians were honeſt men, who received and propagated what they apprehended to be true, yet, where *judgment*, and not ſimple *teſtimony to facts*, was required, they might be miſtaken themſelves, and lead others into miſtakes.

On

On this ſubject I have written more largely in the *Theological Repoſitory*, *Vol. IV.* &c. under the ſignature of *Pamphilus*; but I thought it not amiſs to obſerve thus much in this place, on the republication of this piece of Mr. Collins.

Whatever Mr. Collins was himſelf, and whatever be the merits of his writings againſt revealed religion, this tract of his on the ſubject of *philoſophical neceſſity*, and the doctrine itſelf, ought not to ſuffer in conſequence of it. Let every tenet be tried by its own proper evidence, and ſtand clear of any odium that may be thrown upon it from the characters of thoſe that have maintained it. Unfortunately, this has been more particularly the caſe with the doctrines of *Materialiſm* and *Neceſſity*. Becauſe both Materialiſts and Neceſſarians were ſome time ago generally unbelievers, it has been taken for granted that *all* neceſſarians, and eſpecially all materialiſts, muſt be deiſts, if not atheiſts. It has, however, ſufficiently appeared from the writings of Dr. Hartley, Dr. Edwards, and many others, that all *Neceſſarians* are not unbelievers; and the ſame is, I hope, now the

caſe, with reſpect to *Materialiſts*, who, as I have ſhewn at large, are the only conſiſtent believers in revelation; the doctrine of a *ſeparate ſoul* having been introduced from the heathen philoſophy, and being irreconcileable with the ſcripture account of a future ſtate, viz. that of the *reſurrection of the dead* at a future period, and not the continued exiſtence of an immaterial ſoul, incapable of dying at all.

The time I hope is approaching when chriſtians in general will be better able to diſtinguiſh their friends from their enemies, and the genuine doctrines of their religion from the corruptions of it. And this period will be much accelerated by the friends of truth and genuine chriſtianity, not being afraid of lying under the imputation of being its enemies for a time. They muſt openly avow their principles, under the moſt obnoxious appellations, and with all their conſequences; and in time it will be evident, even to the moſt uninſtructed and prejudiced, that men profeſſing chriſtianity, who devote themſelves to the ſtudy of it, and whoſe lives are no reproach to it, are not to be rejected from

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the claſs of chriſtians. By this means the attention of the inquiring part of the world will be attracted to their ſentiments. This will occaſion *examination*, and the reſult of examination will be *conviction* with reſpect to whatever is *truth*. After this we ſhall no more hear of Socinians, Neceſſarians, and Materialiſts, being of courſe *no Chriſtians*. On the contrary, they will be found to be the only enlightened, and conſiſtent chriſtians, and the only ones qualified to anſwer the objections of unbelievers. It is their chriſtianity only that is *founded upon a rock*, and to their firm and judicious labours in its ſupport, will be owing its univerſal prevalence in the world.

N. B. There are two tranſlations of Mr. Collins's work into French. A new edition of the ſecond of them was given to me when I was at Paris, printed in the year 1756. The tranſlator has added many *notes*, which I ſhould have tranſlated, if they had appeared to me to be of much importance in this country.

THE

THE AUTHOR's

PREFACE.

TOO much care cannot be taken to prevent being miſunderſtood and prejudged, in handling queſtions of ſuch nice ſpeculation, as thoſe of *Liberty* and *Neceſſity*; and therefore, though I might in juſtice expect to be read before any judgment be paſſed on me, I think it proper to premiſe the following obſervations.

1. Firſt, though I deny *liberty* in a certain meaning of that word; yet I contend for *liberty*, as it ſignifies, *a power in man, to do as he wills, or pleaſes*, which is the notion of *liberty* maintained by ARISTOTLE, CICERO, Mr. LOCKE, and ſeveral other Philoſophers, ancient and modern; and indeed, after a careful examination of the beſt authors who have treated of *liberty*, I may affirm, that however oppoſite they appear in words to one another, and how much

ſoever ſome of them ſeem to maintain another notion of *liberty*, yet at the bottom, there is an almoſt univerſal agreement in the notion defended by me, and all that they ſay, when examined, will be found to amount to no more.

2. Secondly, when I affirm *neceſſity*, I contend only for what is called *moral neceſſity*, meaning thereby, *that man, who is an intellegent and ſenſible being, is determined by his reaſon, and his ſenſes*; and I deny man to be ſubject to ſuch neceſſity as is in clocks, watches, and ſuch other beings, which for want of *ſenſation* and *intelligence*, are ſubject to an *abſolute*, *phyſical*, or *mechanical neceſſity*. And here alſo I have the concurrence of almoſt all the greateſt aſſerters of *liberty*, who either expreſsly maintain *moral neceſſity*, or the thing ſignified by thoſe words.

3. Thirdly, I have undertaken to ſhew, that the [illegible]ons I advance, are ſo far from being inconſiſtent with, that they are the ſole foundations of morality and laws, and of rewards and puniſhments in ſociety; and that the notions I explode, are ſubverſive of them. This I judged neceſſary to make

out, in treating a ſubject that has a relation to morality, becauſe nothing can be true which ſubverts thoſe things; and all diſcourſe muſt be defective, wherein the reader perceives any diſagreement to *moral truth*; which is as evident as any ſpeculative *truth*, and much more neceſſary to be rendered clear to the reader's mind, than *truth* in all other ſciences.

4. Fourthly, I have entitled my diſcourſe, *a Philoſophical Enquiry, &c.* becauſe I propoſe only to prove my point by experience and by reaſon, omitting all conſiderations ſtrictly *theological*. By this method I have reduced the matter to a ſhort compaſs; and hope I ſhall give no leſs ſatisfaction, than if I had conſidered it alſo *theologically*; for all but Enthuſiaſts, muſt think *true theology* conſiſtent with reaſon, and with experience.

5. Fifthly, if any ſhould aſk, *of what uſe* ſuch a diſcourſe is? I might offer to their conſideration, firſt, the *uſefulneſs* of truth in general: ſecondly, the *uſefulneſs* of the truths I maintain towards eſtabliſhing laws and morality, rewards and puniſhments in ſociety; but ſhall content myſelf with obſerving, that it may be *of uſe* to all thoſe who de-

ſire to know the truth in the queſtions that I handle, and that think examination the proper means to arrive at that knowledge. As for thoſe, who either make no inquiries at all, and concern not themſelves about any ſpeculations; or who take up with ſpeculations, without any examination; or who read only books to confirm themſelves in the ſpeculations they have received: I allow my book to be of *no uſe* to them, but yet think they may allow others to enjoy a taſte different from their own.

CON-

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A

PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY

CONCERNING

HUMAN LIBERTY.

To LUCIUS.

"I Here ſend you in writing my thoughts con-
"cerning LIBERTY and NECESSITY, which
"you have ſo often deſired of me: and in drawing
"them up, have had regard to your penetration, by
"being as ſhort as is conſiſtent with being under-
"ſtood, and to your love of truth, by ſaying no-
"thing but what I think true, and alſo all the truth
"that I apprehend relates to the ſubject, with the ſin-
"cerity belonging to the converſation of friends. If
"you think me either too ſhort in any reſpect, or to
"have omitted the conſideration of any objection,
"by its not occurring to me, or, that you think of
"importance to be conſidered: be pleaſed to ac-
"quaint me therewith, and I will give you all the
"ſatisfaction I can."

INTRODUCTION.

It is a common obſervation, even among the learned, that there are certain matters of ſpeculation, about which it is impoſſible, from the nature of the ſubjects themſelves, to ſpeak clearly and diſtinctly. Upon which account, men are very indulgent to, and pardon the unintelligible diſcourſes of Theologers and Philoſophers, which treat of the ſublime points in theology and philoſophy. And there is no queſtion in the whole compaſs of ſpeculation, of which men have written more obſcurely, and of which it is thought more impoſſible to diſcourſe clearly, and concerning which men more expect, and pardon obſcure diſcourſe, than upon the ſubjects of *Liberty* and *Neceſſity*. But this common obſervation, is both a common and a learned error. For whoever employs his thoughts either about God, or the Trinity in Unity, or any other profound ſubject, ought to have ſome ideas, to be the objects of his thoughts, in the ſame manner as he has in thinking on the moſt common ſubjects: for where ideas fail us in any matter, our thoughts muſt alſo fail us. And it is plain, whenever we have ideas, we are able to communicate them to others by words*: for words being arbitrary marks of our ideas, we can never want them to ſignify our ideas, as long as we

* I do not mean unknown ſimple ideas. Theſe can at firſt only be made known by application of the object to the faculty; but when they have been once perceived, and a common name agreed upon to ſignify them, they can be communicated by words.

have ſo many in uſe among us, and a power to make as many more as we have occaſion for. Since then we can think of nothing farther than we have ideas, and can ſignify all the ideas we have by words to one another; why ſhould we not be able to put one idea into a propoſition as well as another? Why not to compare ideas together about one ſubject as well as another? And why not to range one ſort of propoſitions into order and method as well as another? When we uſe the term GOD, the idea ſignified thereby, ought to be as diſtinct and determinate in us, as the idea of a triangle or a ſquare, when we diſcourſe of either of them; otherwiſe, the term GOD is an empty ſound. What hinders us then from putting the idea ſignified by the term GOD into a propoſition, any more than the idea of a triangle or a ſquare? And why cannot we compare that idea with another idea, as well as any two other ideas together: ſince compariſon of ideas conſiſts in obſerving wherein ideas differ, and wherein they agree: to which nothing is requiſite in any ideas, but their being diſtinct and determinate in our minds? And ſince we ought to have a diſtinct and determinate idea to the term GOD, whenever we uſe it, and as diſtinct and determinate as that of a triangle or a ſquare; ſince we can put it into a propoſition; ſince we can compare it with other ideas on account of its diſtinctneſs and determinateneſs; why ſhould we not be able to range our

thoughts about GOD in as clear a method, and with as great perſpicuity as about figure and quantity.

I would not hereby be thought to ſuppoſe, that the idea of God is an adequate idea, and exhauſts the ſubject it refers to, like the idea of a triangle or a ſquare; or that it is as eaſy to form in our minds, as the idea of a triangle or a ſquare; or that it does not require a great comprehenſion of mind to bring together the various ideas that relate to GOD, and ſo compare them together; or that there are not ſeveral propoſitions concerning him that are doubtful, and of which we can arrive at no certainty; or that there are not many propoſitions concerning him ſubject to very great difficulties or objections. All theſe I grant: but I ſay, they are no reaſons to juſtify obſcurity. For, firſt, an inadequate idea is no leſs diſtinct, as ſuch, than an adequate idea, and no leſs true, as far as it goes; and therefore may be diſcourſed of with equal clearneſs and truth. Secondly, though the idea of GOD be not ſo eaſy to form in our minds as the idea of a triangle or a ſquare, and it requires a great comprehenſion of mind to bring together the various ideas that relate to him, and compare them together; yet theſe are only reaſons for uſing a greater application, or for not writing at all. Thirdly, if a writer has in relation to his ſubject any doubts or objections in his mind,

mind, which he cannot reſolve to his ſatisfaction, he may expreſs thoſe conceptions or thoughts no leſs clearly, than any other conceptions or thoughts. He ſhould only take care not to exceed the bounds of thoſe conceptions, nor endeavour to make his reader underſtand what he does not underſtand himſelf: for when he exceeds thoſe bounds, his diſcourſe muſt be dark, and his pains uſeleſs. To expreſs what a man conceives is the end of writing; and every reader ought to be ſatisfied, when he ſees an author ſpeak of a ſubject according to the light he has about it, ſo far as to think him a clear writer.

When therefore any writer ſpeaks obſcurely, either about GOD, or any other idea of his mind, the defect is in him. For why did he write before he had a meaning; or before he was able to expreſs to others what he meant? Is it not unpardonable for a man to cant, who pretends to teach?

Theſe general reflections may be confirmed by matter of fact from the writings of the moſt celebrated dogmatical authors.

When ſuch great men as GASSENDUS, CARTESIUS, CUDWORTH, LOCKE, BAYLE, Sir ISAAC NEWTON, and Mr. de FONTENELLE treat of the moſt profound queſtions in metaphyſicks, mathe-

maticks, and other parts of philoſophy; they by handling them as far as their clear and diſtinct ideas reached, have written with no leſs perſpicuity to their proper readers, than other authors have done about hiſtorical matters, and upon the plaineſt and moſt common ſubjects.

On the other ſide, when authors, who in other reſpects, are equal to the foregoing, treat of any ſubjects further than they have clear and diſtinct ideas; they do, and cannot but write to as little purpoſe, and take as abſurd pains, as the moſt ignorant authors do, who treat of any ſubject under a total ignorance, or a confuſed knowledge of it. There are ſo many examples of theſe latter occurring to every reader; and there are ſuch frequent complaints of men's venturing beyond their ability in ſeveral queſtions; that I need not name particular authors, and may fairly avoid the odium of cenſuring any one. But having met with a paſſage concerning the ingenious Father MALEBRANCHE in the *Letters* of Mr. BAYLE, who was an able judge, a friend to him, and a defender of him in other reſpects, I hope I may, without being liable to exception, produce Father MALEBRANCHE as an example. He has in ſeveral books treated of, and vindicated, the opinion of *ſeeing all things in God*; and yet ſo acute a per-

a perſon as Mr. BAYLE, after having read them all, declares, that he *leſs comprehends his notion from his laſt book than ever**. Which plainly ſhows a defect in F. MALEBRANCHE to write upon a ſubject he underſtood not, and therefore could not make others underſtand.

You ſee, I beſpeak no favour in the queſtion before me, and take the whole fault to myſelf, if I do not write clearly to you on it, and prove what I propoſe.

And that I may inform you, in what I think clear to myſelf, I will begin with explaining the ſenſe of the queſtion.

The Queſtion ſtated.

Man is a *neceſſary agent*, if all his actions are ſo determined by the cauſes preceding each action, that not one paſt action could poſſibly not have come to paſs, or have been otherwiſe than it hath been; nor one future action can poſſibly not come to paſs, or be otherwiſe than it ſhall be. He is a *free agent*, if he is able, at any time under the circumſtances and cauſes he then is, to do different things: or, in other words, if he is not unavoidably deter-

* J'ai parcouru le nouveau livre du Pere Malebranche contre Mr. Arnauld: & j'y ai moins compris que jamais ſa pretention, que les Idées, par leſquelles, nous connoiſſons les Objets, ſont en Dieu, & non dans notre Ame. Il y a là du mal-entendu: ce ſont, ce me ſemble, des equivoques perpetuelles. *Letter of the 16th of October, 1705, to Mr. Des Maizeaux.*

mined in every point of time by the circumſtances he is in, and the cauſes he is under, to do that one thing he does, and not poſſibly to do any other.

Firſt Argument, wherein our Experience is conſidered.

I. This being a queſtion of fact concerning what we ourſelves do; we will, firſt, conſider our own experience; which if we can know, as ſure we may, will certainly determine this matter. And becauſe experience is urged with great triumph, by the patrons of *Liberty*, we will begin with a few general reflections concerning the argument of experience: and then we will proceed to our experience itſelf.

General Reflections on the Argument of Experience.

1. The vulgar, who are bred up to believe *Liberty* or *Freedom*, think themſelves ſecure of ſucceſs, conſtantly appealing to *Experience* for a proof of their freedom, and being perſuaded that they feel themſelves free on a thouſand occaſions. And the ſource of their miſtake, ſeems to be as follows. They either attend not to, or ſee not the cauſes of their actions, eſpecially in matters of little moment, and thence conclude, they are free, or not moved by cauſes, to do what they do.

They alſo frequently do actions whereof they repent: and becauſe in the repenting humour, they find no preſent motive to do thoſe actions, they conclude,

clude, that they might not have done them at the time they did them, and that they were *free* from neceſſity (as they were from outward impediments) in the doing them.

They alſo find, that they can do as they will, and forbear as they will, without any external impediment to hinder them from doing as they will; let them will either doing or forbearing. They likewiſe ſee, that they often change their minds; that they can, and do chuſe differently every ſucceſſive moment; and that they frequently deliberate, and thereby are ſometimes at a near balance, and in a ſtate of indifference with reſpect to judging about ſome propoſitions, and willing or chuſing with reſpect to ſome objects. And experiencing theſe things, they miſtake them for the exerciſe of *Freedom*, or *Liberty* from *Neceſſity*. For aſk them, whether they think themſelves *free?* and they will immediately anſwer, *Yes:* and ſay ſome one or other of theſe foregoing things, and particularly think they prove themſelves *free*, when they affirm, *they can do as they will.*

Nay, celebrated Philoſophers and Theologers, both ancient and modern, who have meditated much on this matter, talk after the ſame manner, giving definitions of *Liberty*, that are conſiſtent with *Fate* or *Neceſſity*; though, at the ſame time they would be

be thought to exempt ſome of the actions of man from the power of *Fate*, or to aſſert *Liberty* from *Neceſſity*. CICERO * defines *Liberty* to be, *a power to do as we will*. And therein ſeveral moderns follow him. One defines *Liberty* † to be, *a power to act, or not to act, as we will*. Another defines it in more words thus ‡: *a power to do what we will, and becauſe we will; ſo that if we did not will it, we ſhould not do it; we ſhould even do the contrary if we willed it*. And another ‖, *a power to do or forbear an action, according to the determination or thought of the mind, whereby either is preferred to the other*. On all which definitions, if the reader will be pleaſed to reflect, he will ſee them to be only definitions of *liberty* or *freedom from outward impediments of action*, and not a *Freedom* or *Liberty from Neceſſity*; as I alſo will ſhew them to be in the ſequel of this diſcourſe, wherein I ſhall contend equally with them for ſuch a power as they deſcribe, though I affirm, That there is *no Liberty from Neceſſity*.

ALEXANDER the *Aphrodiſæan* § (a moſt acute philoſopher of the ſecond century, and the earlieſt commentator now extant upon *Ariſtotle*, and eſteemed his

* Opera, p. 3968. Ed. Gron.
† Placette Eclairciſſ. ſur la Liberte, p. 2
‡ Jaquelot. ſur l'exiſt. de Dieu. p. 381.
‖ Locke's Eſſay of Human Underſtanding, Book II. c. xxi. § 8.
§ Fabricii Bibl. Gr. Vol. IV. 63. Voſſius de Sect. Phil. c. 18.

beſt,

beſt *defender* and *interpreter*) defines *Liberty* to be *, *a power to chuſe what to do after deliberation and conſultation, and to chuſe and do what is moſt eligible to our reaſon; whereas otherwiſe we ſhould follow our fancy.* Now a choice after deliberation, is a no leſs neceſſary choice, than a choice by fancy. For though a choice by fancy, or without deliberation, may be one way, and a choice with deliberation may be another way, or different; yet each choice being founded on what is judged beſt, the one for one reaſon, and the other for another, is equally neceſſary; and good or bad reaſons, haſty or deliberate thoughts, fancy or deliberation, make no difference.

In the ſame manner, Biſhop BRAMHALL †, who has written ſeveral books for *Liberty*, and pretends to aſſert the Liberty taught by ARISTOTLE, defines *Liberty* thus: He ſays, *That act which makes a man's actions to be truly free, is* election; *which is the deliberate chuſing or refuſing of this or that means, or the acceptation of one means before another, where divers are repreſented by the underſtanding.* And that this definition places *Liberty* wholly *in chuſing* the ſeeming beſt *means*, and not in chuſing the ſeeming worſt means, equally with the beſt, will appear from the following paſſages. He ſays, *actions done*

* De fato. p. m. 57. † Bp. Bramhall's works, p. 755.

in

in ſudden and violent paſſions, are not free; becauſe there is no deliberation nor election.---To ſay the will is determined by motives, that is, *by reaſons or diſcourſes, is as much as to ſay that the agent is determined by himſelf,* or is free. *Becauſe motives determine not naturally, but morally; which kind of determination is conſiſtent with true Liberty---Admitting that the will follows neceſſarily the laſt dictate of the underſtanding, this is not deſtructive of the liberty of the will; this is only an hypothetical neceſſity.* So that *Liberty*, with him, conſiſts in chuſing, or refuſing neceſſarily after deliberation; which chuſing or refuſing is morally and hypothetically determined, or neceſſary by virtue of the ſaid deliberation.

Laſtly, a great *Armenian* Theologer, who has writ a courſe of *Philoſophy*, and entered into ſeveral controverſies on the ſubject of *Liberty*, makes *Liberty* to conſiſt in * *an indifferency of mind while a thing is under deliberation. For*, ſays he, *while the mind deliberates*, it is *free till the moment of action*; becauſe *nothing determines it neceſſarily to act, or not to act.* Whereas, when the mind balances or compares ideas or motives together, it is then no leſs *neceſſarily* determined to a ſtate of *indifferency* by the appearances of thoſe ideas and motives, than it is *neceſſarily*

* Le Clerc Bibl. Choiſ. Tom. xii. p. 10. 3, 104.

deter-

determined *in the* very *moment of action.* Were a man to be at liberty in this ſtate of *indifferency*, he ought to have it in his power to be *not indifferent*, at the ſame time that he is *indifferent.*

If *experience* therefore proves the *liberty* contended for by the foregoing aſſerters of *liberty*, it proves men to have *no liberty from neceſſity.*

2. As the foregoing aſſerters of liberty, give us definitions of *Liberty*, as grounded on experience, which are conſiſtent with *Neceſſity*; ſo ſome of the greateſt patrons of liberty, do by their conceſſions in this matter, ſufficiently deſtroy all argument from *Experience.*

ERASMUS in his treatiſe for *Free-will*, againſt LUTHER, ſays, **That among the difficulties which have exerciſed the Theologers and Philoſophers of all ages, there is none greater than the queſtion of free-will.* And Mr. Le CLERC, ſpeaking of this book of ERASMUS, ſays, †*that the queſtion of free-will was too ſubtile for* ERASMUS, *who was no Philoſopher; which makes him often contradict himſelf.*

* Opera Tom. 9. p. 1215. † Bibl. Choiſ. Tom. xii. p. 51.

The

The late Biſhop of SARUM *, though he contends, *Every man experiences liberty*; yet owns, that *great difficulties* attend the ſubject *on all hands*, and that therefore *he pretends not to explain or anſwer them.*

The famous BERNARD OCHIN, a great *Italian* wit, has written a moſt ſubtile and ingenious book, entitled, *Labyrinths concerning Free-will and Predeſtination*, &c. wherein he ſhews, that they who aſſert that man acts freely, are involved in four great difficulties; and that thoſe who aſſert that man acts neceſſarily, fall into four other difficulties. So that he forms eight *Labyrinths*, four againſt *Liberty*, and four againſt *Neceſſity*. He turns himſelf all manner of ways to get clear of them; but not being able to find any ſolution, he conſtantly concludes with a prayer to GOD to deliver him from theſe abyſſes. Indeed in the progreſs of his work, he endeavours to furniſh means to get out of this priſon: but he concludes that the only way, is to ſay, with SOCRATES, *Hoc unum ſcio quod nihil ſcio. We ought*, ſays he, *to reſt contented, and conclude, that* GOD *requires neither the affirmative nor negative of us.* This is the title of his laſt chapter, *Qua via ex omnibus ſupradictis Labyrinthis cito exiri poſſit, quæ doctæ ignorantiæ via vocatur.*

* Expoſ. p. 117.

A fa-

A famous author *, who appeals to *common experience*, for a proof of *liberty*, confeſſes, that *the queſtion of liberty is the moſt obſcure and difficult queſtion in all* Philoſophy: that *the learned are fuller of contradictions to themſelves, and to one another, on this, than on any other ſubject:* And that he writes *againſt the common notion of liberty*, and endeavours to eſtabliſh *another notion*, which he allows to be *intricate*.

But how can all this happen in a plain matter of fact, ſuppoſed to be experienced by every body? What difficulty can there be in ſtating a plain matter of fact, and deſcribing what every body feels? What need of ſo much *Philoſophy?* and why ſo many contradictions on the ſubject? And how can all men experience *Liberty*, when it is allowed, that the *common notion* of liberty *is falſe*, or not experienced; and *a new notion of Liberty*, not thought on before (or thought on but by few) is ſet up as matter of experience? This could not happen, if matter of fact was clear for liberty.

3. Other aſſerters of *Liberty* ſeem driven into it on account of ſuppoſed inconveniencies attending the doctrine of *Neceſſity*. The great EPISCOPIUS, in his *Treatiſe of Free-will*, acknowledges in effect, that the aſſert-

* King de Orig. Mali. p. 91. 127.

ers

ers of *Neceſſity* have ſeeming experience on their ſide, and are thereby very numerous; *They**, as he obſerves, *alledge one thing of moment, in which they triumph, viz.* "that the will is determined by the underſtanding: "*and aſſert*, that unleſs it were ſo; the will would "be a blind faculty, and might make evil, as evil, "its object; and reject what is pleaſant and agree-"able: and by conſequence, that all perſuaſions, pro-"miſes, reaſonings and threats, would be as uſeleſs "to a man as to a ſtock or a ſtone." *This*, he allows to be very *plauſible*, and to *have the appearance of probability*; to be *the common ſentiment of the ſchools*; to be *the rock on which the ableſt defenders of liberty have ſplit, without being able to anſwer it*; and to be *the reaſon*, or argument (or rather the matter of experience) *which has made men in all ages, and not a few in this age, fall into the opinion of the fatal neceſſity of all things.* But *becauſe it makes all our actions neceſſary, and thereby*, in his opinion, *ſubverts all religion, laws, rewards, and puniſhments*; he concludes it *to be moſt certainly falſe:* and *religion makes* him *quit this common and plauſible opinion.* Thus alſo many other ſtrenuous aſſerters of *Liberty*, as well as himſelf, are driven by theſe ſuppoſed difficulties, to deny *manifeſt experience.* I ſay, *manifeſt experience*, for are we not manifeſtly determined by pleaſure or pain, and

* Opera Vol. I. p. 198, 199, 200.

by

by what ſeems reaſonable or unreaſonable to us, to judge, or will, or act? Whereas could they ſee that there are not grounds for laws and morality, rewards and puniſhments, but by ſuppoſing the doctrine of *Neceſſity*; and that there is no foundation for laws and morality, rewards and puniſhments, upon the ſuppoſition of a man's being a free-agent (as ſhall evidently, and demonſtratively appear) they would readily allow experience to be againſt *Free-will*, and deny *Liberty*, when they ſhould ſee there was no need to aſſert it, in order to maintain thoſe neceſſary things. And as a farther evidence thereof, let any man peruſe the diſcourſes written by the ableſt authors for liberty, and he will ſee (as they confeſs of one another) that they frequently contradict themſelves, write obſcurely, and know not where to place *Liberty*; at leaſt, he will ſee that he is able to make nothing of their diſcourſes; no more than Mr. LOCKE* was of this treatiſe of EPISCOPIUS, who in all his other writings, ſhews himſelf to be a clear, ſtrong, and argumentative writer.

4. There are others, and thoſe contenders for *Liberty*, as well as deniers of it, who report the perſuaſions of men, as to the matter of fact, very differently, and alſo judge very differently themſelves

* Letters, p. 521.

about the fact, from what is vulgarly believed among thoſe who maintain *Free-will.*

An ancient author ſpeaks thus *: *Fate*, ſays he, *is ſufficiently proved from the general received opinion and perſuaſion of men thereof. For, in certain things, when men all agree, except a few, who diſſent from them on account of maintaining ſome doctrines before taken up, they cannot be miſtaken. Wherefore* ANAXAGORAS *the* Clazomenian, *though no contemptible naturaliſt, ought not to be judged to deſerve any regard, when oppoſing the common perſuaſion of all men, he aſſerts*, "That nothing "is done by fate; but that it is an empty name." And according to all authors, recording the opinions of men in this matter, the belief of *Fate*, as to all events, has continued to be the *moſt common perſuaſion* both of philoſophers and people; as it is at this day the perſuaſion of much the greateſt part of mankind, according to the relations of voyagers. And though it has not equally prevailed among chriſtians, as it has, and does, among all other religious parties; yet it is certain, the fataliſts have been, and are very numerous among chriſtians: and the free-will theologers themſelves allow, † *That ſome Chriſtians are as great Fataliſts, as any of the ancient Philoſophers were.*

* Alexander de Fato, p. 10.
† Reeves's Apol. vol 1. p. 150. Sherlock of Prov. p. 66.

The

The acute and penetrating Mr. BAYLE, reports the fact, as very differently underſtood by thoſe who have thoroughly examined and conſidered the various actions of man, from what is vulgarly ſuppoſed in this matter. Says he, * *They who examine not to the bottom what paſſes within them, eaſily perſuade themſelves, that they are free: but, they who have conſidered with care the foundation and circumſtances of their actions, doubt of their freedom, and are even perſuaded, that their reaſon and underſtandings are ſlaves that cannot reſiſt the force which carries them along.* He ſays alſo, in a familiar letter, *That the beſt proofs alledged for* liberty *are, that without it, man could not ſin; and that God would be the author of evil, as well as good thoughts* †.

And the celebrated Mr. LEIBNITZ, that univerſal genius, on occaſion of Archbiſhop KING's *appeal to experience* (in behalf of his notion of *liberty*, viz. ‡ *A faculty, which, being indifferent to objects, and over-ruling our paſſions, appetites, ſenſations, and reaſon, chuſes arbitrarily among objects; and renders the object choſen agreeable, only becauſe it has choſen it*) denies, that we experience ſuch, or any other, *liberty*; but contends that we rather experience a determination in all our

* Dictionare, p. 1497. 2o edit.
† Letter of the 13th of December, 1696, to the Abbot du Bos.
‡ De orig. mali. c. 5.

actions. Says he, * *We experience ſomething in us which inclines us to a choice; and if it happens that we cannot give a reaſon of all our inclinations, a little attention will ſhow us, that the conſtitution of our bodies, the bodies encompaſſing us, the preſent, or preceding ſtate of our minds, and ſeveral little matters comprehended under theſe great cauſes, may contribute to make us chuſe certain objects, without having recourſe to a pure indifference, or to I know not what power of the ſoul, which does upon objects, what they ſay colours do upon the camelion.* In fine he is ſo far from thinking that there is the leaſt foundation, from *experience*, for the ſaid notion of *liberty*, that he treats it as a *chimera*, and compares it *to the magical power of the fairies to transform things.*

Laſtly, The Journaliſts of *Paris* are very far from thinking Archbiſhop KING's notion of liberty to be matter of experience, when they ſay, *That Dr.* KING, *not ſatisfied with any of the former notions of liberty, propoſes a new notion; and carries indifference ſo far, as to maintain that pleaſure is not the motive, but the effect of the choice of the will*; placet res quia eligitur, non eligitur quia placet. *This opinion*, add they, *makes him frequently contradict himſelf* †.

* Remarques ſur le liv. de l'Orig. du mal, p. 76.
† Journal des Savans of the 16th of March, 1505.

So

So that upon the whole, the affair of experience, with relation to *liberty*, ſtands thus. Some give the name *liberty* to actions, which, when deſcribed, are plainly actions that are neceſſary; Others, though appealing to vulgar experience, yet inconſiſtently therewith, contradict the vulgar experience, by owning it to be an *intricate matter*, and treating it after an intricate manner: Others are driven into the defence of *liberty*, by difficulties imagined to flow from the doctrine of *neceſſity*, combating what they allow to be matter of ſeeming experience: Others, and thoſe the moſt diſcerning, either think liberty cannot be proved by experience, or think men may ſee by experience, that they are *neceſſary agents*; and the bulk of mankind have always been perſuaded that they are neceſſary agents.

Our Experience itſelf conſidered.

Having thus paved the way by ſhewing that liberty is not a plain matter of experience, by arguments drawn from the aſſerters of liberty themſelves, and by conſequence ſubverted the argument from experience for liberty; we will now run over the various actions of men which can be conceived to concern this ſubject, and examine, whether we can know from experience, that man is a free or a neceſſary agent. I think thoſe actions may be reduced to theſe

four: 1. Perception of Ideas. 2 Judging of Propoſitions. 3. Willing. 4. Doing as we will.

1. *Perception of Ideas.* Of this there can be no diſpute but it is a neceſſary action of man, ſince it is not even a voluntary action. The ideas both of ſenſation and reflection, offer themſelves to us whether we will or no, and we cannot reject them. We muſt be conſcious that we think, when we do think; and thereby we neceſſarily have the ideas of reflection. We muſt alſo uſe our ſenſes when awake; and thereby neceſſarily receive the ideas of ſenſation. And as we neceſſarily receive ideas, ſo each idea is neceſſarily what it is in our mind: for it is not poſſible to make any thing different from itſelf. This firſt neceſſary action, the reader will ſee, is the foundation and cauſe of all the other intelligent actions of man, and makes them alſo neceſſary. For, as a judicious author, and nice obſerver of the inward actions of man, ſays truly, * *Temples have their ſacred images, and we ſee what influence they have always had over a great part of mankind. But in truth, the ideas and images in men's minds, are the* INVISIBLE POWERS *that conſtantly govern them, and to theſe, they univerſally pay a ready ſubmiſſion.*

* Locke's works, p. 1, 2.

2. The

2. The ſecond action of man is *judging of propoſitions*. All propoſitions muſt appear to me either ſelf-evident, or evident from proof, or probable, or improbable, or doubtful, or falſe. Now theſe various appearances of propoſitions to me, being founded on my capacity, and the degree of light propoſitions ſtand into me, I can no more change thoſe appearances in me, than I can change the idea of *red* raiſed in me. Nor can I judge contrary to thoſe appearances: for what is judging of propoſitions, but judging that propoſitions do appear as they do appear? which I cannot avoid doing, without lying to myſelf: which is impoſſible. If any man thinks he can judge a propoſition, appearing to him evident, to be not evident; or a probable propoſition, to be more or leſs probable than it appears by the proofs to be; he knows not what he ſays, as he may ſee, if he will define his words. The neceſſity of being determined by appearances, was maintained by all the old philoſophers, even by the *Academics* or *Sceptics*. CICERO ſays*, *You muſt take from a man his ſenſes, if you take from him the power of aſſenting; for it is as neceſſary the mind ſhould yield to what is clear, as that a ſcale hanging on a balance, ſhould ſink with a weight laid on it. For as all living creatures cannot but deſire what is agreeable*

* Academ. Queſt. lib. 2.

to their natures, ſo they cannot but aſſent to what is clear. Wherefore, if thoſe things whereof we diſpute are true; it is to no purpoſe to ſpeak of aſſent. For he who apprehends, or perceives any thing, aſſents immediately. Again, *aſſent not only precedes the practice of vice, but of virtue, the ſteady performance whereof, and adherence to which, depend on what a man has aſſented to and approved. And it is neceſſary, that ſomething ſhould appear to us before we act, and that we ſhould aſſent to that appearance. Wherefore he who takes away appearances and aſſent from man, deſtroys all action in him.* The force of this reaſoning manifeſtly extends to all the various judgments men make upon the appearances of things. And CICERO, as an Academic, or Sceptic, muſt be ſuppoſed to extend *neceſſity* to every kind of *judgment*, or *aſſent*, of man upon the *appearances* (or as the *Greeks* call them Φαινομένα and himſelf the *Viſa*) of things. SEXTUS EMPIRICUS ſays*, *they who ſay, the Sceptics take away appearances, have not converſed with them, and do not underſtand them. For we deſtroy not the paſſions, to which our ſenſes find themſelves expoſed whether we will or no, and which force us to ſubmit to appearances. For when it is aſked us,* whether objects are ſuch as they appear? *we deny not their appear-*

* Pyrrhon. Hypot. l. 2. c. 10.

ances

ances, nor doubt of them, but only queſtion whether the external objects are like the appearances.

3. *Willing*, is the third action of man, which I propoſe to conſider. It is matter of daily experience, that we begin, or forbear, continue or end, ſeveral actions barely by a thought, or preference of the mind, ordering the doing or not doing, the continuing or ending, ſuch or ſuch actions. Thus, before we think or deliberate on any ſubject, as before we get on horſeback, we do prefer thoſe things to any thing elſe in competition with them. In like manner, if we forbear theſe actions, when any of them are offered to our thoughts: or if we continue to proceed in any one of theſe actions once begun: or if at any time we make an end of proſecuting them; we do forbear, or continue, or end them on our preference of the forbearance to the doing of them, of the continuing of them to the ending them, and of the ending to the continuing them. This power of the man thus to order the beginning or forbearance, the continuance, or ending, of any action, is called *the will*, and the actual exerciſe thereof, *willing*.

There are two queſtions uſually put about this matter: *firſt*, Whether we are at liberty to will or not to will? *ſecondly*, Whether we are at liberty to

to will one or the other of two or more objects?

1. As to the firſt, *whether we are at liberty to will, or not to will?* it is manifeſt, we have not that liberty. For let an action in a man's power be propoſed to him as preſently to be done, as for example, *to walk*; the will to walk, or not to walk, exiſts immediately. And when an action in a man's power is propoſed to him to be done to-morrow, as *to walk to-morrow*; he is no leſs obliged to have ſome immediate will. He muſt either have a will to defer willing about the matter propoſed, or he muſt will immediately in relation to the thing propoſed: and one or the other of thoſe wills muſt exiſt immediately, no leſs than the will to walk or not to walk in the former caſe. Wherefore, in every propoſal of ſomething to be done which is in a man's power to do, he cannot but have ſome immediate will.

Hence appears the miſtake of thoſe who **think* men at *liberty to will, or not to will, becauſe*, ſay they, *they can ſuſpend willing*, in relation to actions to be done to-morrow; wherein they plainly confound themſelves with words. For when it is ſaid, man is neceſſarily determined to will; it is not thereby underſtood,

* Locke of the Hum. Und. l. 2. c. 21.

that

that he is determined to will or chuſe one out of two objects immediately in every caſe propoſed to him (or to chuſe at all in ſome caſes; as whether he *will* travel into *France* or *Holland)* but that on every propoſal he muſt neceſſarily have *ſome will.* And he is not leſs determined to will, becauſe he does often ſuſpend willing or chuſing in certain caſes: for *ſuſpending to will,* is itſelf an *act of willing*; it is willing to *defer willing* about the matter propoſed. In fine, though great ſtreſs is laid on the caſe of *ſuſpending the will* to prove *liberty,* yet there is no difference between that and the moſt common caſes of willing and chuſing upon the manifeſt excellency of one object before another. For, as when a man wills or chuſes living in *England* before going out of it (in which will he is manifeſtly determined by the ſatisfaction he has in living in *England*) he rejects the will to go out of *England*; ſo a man, who ſuſpends a will about any matter, wills doing nothing in it at preſent, or rejects for a time willing about it; which circumſtances of wholly rejecting, and rejecting for a time, make no variation that affects the queſtion. So that willing, or chuſing, *ſuſpenſion,* is like all other choices or wills that we have.

2. Secondly, let us now ſee, *whether we are at liberty to will, or chuſe, one or the other of two or more objects.*

jects. Now as to this, we will, *firſt*, conſider, whether we are at liberty to will one of two or more objects wherein we diſcern any difference: that is, where one, upon the whole, ſeems leſs hurtful than another. And this will not admit of much diſpute, if we conſider what willing is. Willing or preferring is the ſame with reſpect to good and evil, that judging is with reſpect to truth or falſhood. It is judging, that one thing is, upon the whole, better than another, or not ſo bad as another. Wherefore, as we judge of truth or falſhood according to appearances; ſo we muſt will or prefer as things ſeem to us, unleſs we can lye to ourſelves, and think that to be worſt, which we think beſt.

An ingenious author expreſſes this matter well, when he ſays*, "*the queſtion*, whether a man be at "liberty to will which of the two he pleaſes, mo-"tion or reſt; *carries the abſurdity of it ſo manifeſtly in* "*itſelf, that one might hereby be ſufficiently convinced,* "*that liberty concerns not the will. For to aſk,* "whether a man be at liberty to will either motion "or reſt; ſpeaking or ſilence, which he pleaſes? "*is to aſk, whether a man can will what he wills, or* "*be pleaſed with what he is pleaſed with? A queſtion* "*that needs no anſwer.*"

* Locke's Eſſay of Human Underſtanding, l. 2. c. 21. ſect. 25.

To

To ſuppoſe a ſenſible being capable of willing or preferring (call it as you pleaſe) miſery, and refuſing good, is to deny it to be really ſenſible; for every man, while he has his ſenſes, aims at pleaſure and happineſs, and avoids pain and miſery; and this, in willing actions, which are ſuppoſed to be attended with the moſt terrible conſequences. And therefore the ingenious Mr. NORRIS* very juſtly obſerves, that *all who commit ſin, think it at the inſtant of commiſſion, all things conſidered, a leſſer evil; otherwiſe it is impoſſible they ſhould commit it:* and he inſtances in St. PETER's denial of his maſter, *who,* he ſays, *judged that part moſt eligible which he choſe; that is, he judged the ſin of denying his maſter, at that preſent juncture, to be a leſs evil, than the danger of not denying him; and ſo choſe it. Otherwiſe, if he had then actually thought it a greater evil, all that whereby it exceeded the other, he would have choſen* gratis, *and conſequently have willed evil as evil,* which is impoſſible. And another acute philoſopher obſerves †, that *there are in* France *many new converts, who go to maſs with great reluctance. They know they mortally offend God, but as each offence would coſt them* (ſuppoſe) *two piſtoles, and having reckoned the charge, and finding that this fine, paid as often as there are feſtivals and ſundays, would reduce them and their families to beg*

* Theory of Love, p. 199.
† Bayle Reſponſe aux Queſ. &c. vol. 3. p. 756.

their

their bread, they conclude it is better to offend God than beg.

In fine, though there is hardly any thing ſo abſurd, but ſome ancient philoſopher or other may be cited for it; yet according to PLATO*, *none of them were ſo abſurd as to ſay that men did evil voluntarily*; and he aſſerts, that *it is contrary to the nature of man, to follow evil, as evil, and not purſue good*; and that *when a man is compelled to chuſe between two evils, you will never find a man who chuſes the greateſt, if it is in his power to chuſe the leſs*; and that *this is a truth manifeſt to all.* †And even the greateſt modern advocates for *liberty* allow, that *whatever the will chuſeth, it chuſeth under the notion of good*; and that *the object of the will is good in general, which is the end of all human actions.*

This I take to be ſufficient to ſhew, that man is not at liberty to will one or the other of two or more objects, between which (all things conſidered) he perceives a difference; and to account truly for all the choices of that kind, which can be aſſigned.

* Opera, Edit. Serran. vol. 1. p. 345, 346.
† Bramhall's Works, p. 656, and 658.

But,

But, ſecondly, ſome of the patrons of liberty contend, that we are free in our choice among things indifferent, or alike, as in chuſing one out of two or more eggs; and that in ſuch caſes the man having no motives from the objects, is not neceſſitated to chuſe one rather than the other, becauſe there is no perceivable difference between them, but chuſes one by a mere act of willing without any cauſe but his own free act.

To which I anſwer, 1. firſt, by aſking whether this and other inſtances like this are the only inſtances wherein man is free to will or chuſe among objects? If they are the only inſtances wherein man is free to will or chuſe among objects, then we are advanced a great way in the queſtion; becauſe there are few (if any) objects of the will that are perfectly alike; and becauſe neceſſity is hereby allowed to take place in all caſes where there is a perceiveable difference in things, and conſequently in all moral and religious caſes, for the ſake whereof ſuch endeavours have been uſed to maintain ſo abſurd and inconſiſtent a thing as *liberty*, or *freedom* from *neceſſity*. So that liberty is almoſt, if not quite, reduced to nothing, and deſtroyed, as to the grand end in aſſerting it. If thoſe are not the only inſtances wherein man is free to will or chuſe among objects, but man is free

free to will in other caſes, theſe other caſes ſhould be aſſigned, and not ſuch caſes as are of no conſequence, and which by the great likeneſs of the objects to one another, and for other reaſons make the cauſe of the determination of man's will leſs eaſy to be known, and conſequently ſerve to no other purpoſe but to darken the queſtion, which may be better determined by conſidering, *whether man be free to will or no* in more important inſtances.

2. Secondly, I anſwer, that whenever a choice is made, there can be no equality of circumſtances preceding the choice. For in the caſe of chuſing one out of two or more eggs, between which there is no perceivable difference; there is not, nor can there be, a true equality of circumſtances and cauſes preceding the act of chuſing one of the ſaid eggs. It is not enough to render *things* equal to the will, that they are equal or alike in themſelves. All the various modifications of the man, his opinions, prejudices, temper, habit, and circumſtances, are to be taken in, and conſidered as cauſes of *election* no leſs than the objects without us among which we chuſe; and theſe will ever incline or determine our wills, and make the choice we do make, preferable to us, though the external objects of our choice are ever ſo much alike to each other. And, for example, in the caſe of chuſing

chuſing one out of two eggs that are alike, there is, firſt, in the perſon chuſing a will to eat or uſe an egg.

There is, ſecondly, a will to take but one, or one firſt.

Thirdly, conſequent to theſe two wills, follow in the ſame inſtant chuſing and taking *one*; which *one* is choſen and taken moſt commonly, according as the parts of our bodies have been formed long ſince by our wills, or by other cauſes, to an habitual practice, or as thoſe parts are determined by ſome particular circumſtances at that time. And we may know by reflection on our actions that ſeveral of our choices have been determined to one among ſeveral objects by theſe laſt means, when no cauſe has ariſen from the mere conſideration of the objects themſelves. For we know by experience, that we either uſe all the parts of our bodies by habit, or according to ſome particular cauſe determining their uſe at that time.

Fourthly, there are in all trains of cauſes, that precede their effects, and eſpecially effects which nearly reſemble each other, certain differences undiſcernible on account of their minuteneſs, and alſo on account of our not accuſtoming ourſelves to attend to them, which yet, in concurrence with other cauſes, as neceſſarily produce their effect, as the laſt feather laid

on breaks the horſe's back; and as a grain neceſſarily turns the balance between any weights, though the eye cannot diſcover which is the greateſt weight or bulk by ſo ſmall a difference. And I add, that as we know without ſuch diſcovery by the eye, that if one ſcale riſes and the other falls, there is a greater weight in one ſcale than the other, and alſo know that the leaſt additional weight is ſufficient to determine the ſcales; ſo likewiſe we may know that the leaſt circumſtance in the extenſive chain of cauſes, that precede every effect, is ſufficient to produce an effect; and alſo know, that there muſt be cauſes of our choice (though we do not, or cannot diſcern thoſe cauſes) by knowing, *that every thing that has a beginning, muſt have a cauſe.* By which laſt principle we are as neceſſarily led to conceive a cauſe of action in man, where we ſee not the particular cauſe itſelf; as we are to conceive that a greater weight determines a ſcale, though our eyes diſcover no difference between the two weights.

But let us put a caſe of true equality or indifference, and what I have aſſerted will more manifeſtly appear true. Let two eggs appear perfectly alike to a man; and let him have no will to eat or uſe eggs (For ſo the caſe ought to be put, to render things perfectly indifferent to him; becauſe, if once a *will* to eat eggs be ſuppoſed, that *will* muſt neceſ-

ſarily

ſarily introduce a train of cauſes which will ever deſtroy an equality of circumſtances in relation to the things which are the objects of our choice. There will ſoon follow a ſecond will to eat one firſt. And theſe *two wills* muſt put the man upon action, and the uſage of the parts of his body to obtain his end; which parts are determined in their motions either by ſome habitual practice, or by ſome particular circumſtance at that time, and cauſe the man to chuſe and take one of them firſt rather than the other). The caſe of equality being thus rightly ſtated, I ſay, it is manifeſt no choice would or could be made; and the man is viſibly prevented in the beginning from making a choice. For every man experiences, that before he can make a choice among eggs, he muſt have a will to eat or uſe an egg; otherwiſe he muſt let them alone. And he alſo experiences, in relation to all things which are the objects of his choice, that he muſt have a precedent will to chuſe; otherwiſe he will make no choice. No man marries one woman preferable to another, or travels into *France* rather than into another country, or writes a book on one ſubject rather than another, but he muſt firſt have a precedent will to marry, travel, and write.

It is therefore contrary to experience, to ſuppoſe any choice can be made under an equality of cir-

cumſtances. And by conſequence it is matter of experience, that man is ever determined in his willing, or acts of volition and choice.

Doing as we will.

4. Fourthly, I ſhall now conſider the actions of man conſequent to *willing*, and ſee whether he be *free* in any of thoſe actions. And here alſo we experience perfect neceſſity. If we will thinking or deliberating on a ſubject, or will reading, or walking, or riding, we find we muſt do thoſe actions, unleſs ſome external impediment, as an apoplexy, or ſome intervening cauſe, hinders us; and then we are as much neceſſitated to let an action alone, as we are to act according to our will, had no ſuch external impediment to action happened. If alſo we change our wills after we have begun any of theſe actions, we find we neceſſarily leave off theſe actions and follow the *new will* or choice. And this was ARISTOTLE's ſenſe of ſuch actions of man. *As* *, ſays he, *in arguing we neceſſarily aſſent to the inference or concluſion drawn from premiſes, ſo if that arguing relate to practice, we neceſſarily act upon ſuch inference or concluſion. As, for example, when we argue thus,* whatever is ſweet, is to be taſted, this is ſweet: *he who infers,* therefore this ought to be taſted, *neceſſarily taſtes that ſweet thing if there be no obſtacle to hinder him.*

* Ethica, l. 7. c. 5. ap. Opera Edit. Par. Vol. II. p. 88. &c.

For

For a concluſion of this argument from experience, let us compare the actions of inferior, intelligent, and ſenſible agents, and thoſe of men together. It is allowed that beaſts are neceſſary agents, and yet there is no perceivable difference between their actions, and the actions of men, from whence they ſhould be deemed *neceſſary* and men *free* agents. *Sheep*, for example, are ſuppoſed to be *neceſſary agents*, when they ſtand ſtill, lie down, go ſlow or faſt, turn to the right or left, ſkip, as they are differently affected in their minds; when they are doubtful or deliberate which way to take; when they eat and drink more or leſs according to their humour, or as they like the water or the paſture; when they chuſe the ſweeteſt and beſt paſture; when they chuſe among paſtures that are indifferent or alike; when they copulate; when they are fickle or ſtedfaſt in their amours; when they take more or leſs care of their young; when they act in virtue of vain fears; when they apprehend danger, and fly from it, and ſometimes defend themſelves; when they quarrel among themſelves about love or other matters, and terminate thoſe quarrels by fighting; when they follow thoſe leaders among themſelves that preſume to go firſt; and when they are either obedient to the ſhepherd and his dog, or refractory. And why ſhould man be deemed *free* in the performance of the

ſame or like actions? He has indeed more knowledge than ſheep. He takes in more things as matter of pleaſure, than they do; being ſometimes moved with notions of honour and virtue, as well as with thoſe pleaſures he has in common with them. He is alſo more moved by abſent things, and things future, than they are. He is alſo ſubject to more vain fears, more miſtakes and wrong actions, and infinitely more abſurdities in notions. He has alſo more power and ſtrength, as well as more art and cunning, and is capable of doing more good and more miſchief to his fellow-men, than they are to one another. But theſe larger powers and larger weakneſſes which are of the ſame kind with the powers and weakneſſes of ſheep, cannot contain liberty in them, and plainly make no perceivable difference between them and men, as to the general cauſes of action, in finite intelligent and ſenſible beings, no more than the different degrees of theſe powers and weakneſſes, among the various kinds of beaſts, birds, fiſhes, and reptiles do among them. Wherefore I need not run through the actions of *foxes*, or any of the more ſubtile animals, nor the actions of *children*, which are allowed by the advocates * of *liberty*, to be all neceſſary. I ſhall only aſk theſe queſtions concerning the laſt. To what age do children continue

* Bramhall's Works, p. 656. 662.

neceſſary

neceſſary agents, and when do they become *free?* what different experience have they when they are ſuppoſed to be free agents, from what they had while neceſſary agents? And what different actions do they do, from whence it appears, that they are *neceſſary* agents to a certain age, and *free* agents afterwards.

Second Argument taken from the Impoſſibility of Liberty.

II. A ſecond reaſon to prove man a neceſſary agent is, becauſe all his actions have a beginning. For whatever has a beginning muſt have a cauſe; and every cauſe is a neceſſary cauſe.

If any thing can have a beginning which has no cauſe, then nothing can produce ſomething. And if nothing can produce ſomething, then the world might have had a beginning without a cauſe: which is not only an abſurdity commonly charged on Atheiſts, but is a real abſurdity in itſelf.

Beſides, if a cauſe be not a neceſſary cauſe, it is no cauſe at all. For if cauſes are not neceſſary cauſes, then cauſes are not ſuited to, or are indifferent to effects; and the *Epicurean Syſtem* of chance is rendered poſſible; and this orderly world might have been produced by a diſorderly or fortuitous con-

courſe of atoms; or which is all one, by no cauſe at all. For in arguing againſt the Epicurean ſyſtem of chance, do we not ſay (and that juſtly) that it is impoſſible for chance ever to have produced an orderly ſyſtem of things, as not being a cauſe ſuited to the effect; and that an orderly ſyſtem of things which had a beginning, muſt have had an intelligent agent for its cauſe, as being the only proper cauſe to that effect? All which implies, that cauſes are ſuited, or have relation to ſome particular effects, and not to others. And if they be ſuited to ſome particular effect and not to others, they can be no cauſes at all to thoſe others. And therefore a cauſe not ſuited to the effect, and no cauſe, are the ſame thing. And if a cauſe not ſuited to the effect, is no cauſe; then a cauſe ſuited to the effect is a neceſſary cauſe: for if it does not produce the effect, it is not ſuited to it, or is no cauſe at all of it.

Liberty therefore, or a power to act or not to act, to do this or another thing under the ſame cauſes, is an *impoſſibility* and *atheiſtical*.

And as *liberty* ſtands, and can only be grounded on the abſurd principles of *Epicurean Atheiſm*; ſo the *Epicurean Atheiſts*, who were the moſt popular and moſt numerous ſect of the *Atheiſts* of antiquity, were

were the great * aſſerters of *Liberty*; as on the other ſide; the † *Stoicks*, who were the moſt popular and moſt numerous ſect among the religionaries of antiquity, were the great aſſerters of fate and neceſſity. The caſe was alſo the ſame among the *Jews*, as among the heathen: the *Jews*, I ſay, who beſides the light of nature, had many books of Revelation (ſome whereof are now loſt) and who had intimate and perſonal converſation with God himſelf. They were principally divided into three ſects, the *Sadducees*, the *Phariſees*, and the *Eſſenes*. ‡ The *Sadducees*, who were eſteemed an irreligious and atheiſtical ſect, maintained the *liberty of man*. But the *Phariſees*, who were a religious ſect, *aſcribed all things to fate*, or to *God's appointment*, and it was ‖ *the firſt article of their creed, that fate and God do all*; and conſequently they could not aſſert a *true liberty*, when they aſſerted a *liberty* together with this *fatality* and *neceſſity* of all things. And the *Eſſenes*, who were the *moſt religious ſect* among the *Jews*, and fell not under the cenſure of our Saviour for their hypocriſy as the *Phariſees* did, were aſſerters of *abſolute fate* and *neceſſity*. *St.* Paul, ¶ who was a *Phariſee, and the ſon of a Phariſee*, is ſuppoſed by the

* Lucretius, l. 2. v. 250, &c. Euſ. Prep. Ev. l. 6. c. 7.
† Cicero de Nat. Deor. l. 1.
‡ Joſephus Antiq. l. 18. c. 2.
‖ Jud. l. 2. c. 7.
¶ Acts 23. 6.

learned

learned DODWELL*, *to have received his doctrine of fate from the maſters of that ſect, as they received it from the Stoicks.* And he obſerves further, that *the Stoick Philoſophy is neceſſary for the explication of Chriſtian Theology*; that *there are examples in the holy ſcriptures of the Holy Ghoſt's ſpeaking according to the opinions of the Stoicks*; and that in particular *the Apoſtle St.* PAUL *in what he has diſputed concerning Predeſtination and Reprobation, is to be expounded according to the Stoicks opinion concerning fate.* So that *liberty* is both the real foundation of popular Atheiſm, and has been the profeſſed principle of the Atheiſts themſelves; as on the other ſide, *fate*, or the *neceſſity of events*, has been eſteemed a religious opinion, and been the profeſſed principle of the religious, both among Heathens and Jews, and alſo of that great convert to chriſtianity, and great converter of others, St. PAUL.

Third Argument taken from the Imperfection of Liberty.

III. Thirdly, *Liberty* is contended for by the patrons thereof as a great *perfection.* In order therefore to diſprove all pretences for it, I will now ſhow, that according to all the various deſcriptions given of it by Theologers and Philoſophers, it would often be an *imperfection*, but never a *perfection*, as I have in

* Proleg. ad Stearn. de Obſtin. ſect. 40, and 41.

the

the laſt article ſhowed it to be *impoſſible* and *atheiſtical*.

1. * If *liberty* be defined, *a power to paſs different judgments* at the ſame inſtant of time *upon the ſame individual propoſitions that are not evident* (we being, as it is owned *neceſſarily determined* to paſs but *one judgment on evident propoſitions*) it will follow, that men will be ſo far irrational, and by conſequence *imperfect* agents, as they have that *freedom of judgment*. For, ſince they would be irrational agents, if they were capable of judging evident propoſitions not to be evident; they muſt be alſo deemed irrational agents, if they are capable of judging the ſelf-ſame probable or improbable propoſitions not to be probable or improbable. The appearances of all propoſitions to us, whether evident, probable, or improbable, are the ſole rational grounds of our judgments in relation to them: and the appearances of probable or improbable propoſitions, are no leſs neceſſary in us from the reſpective reaſons by which they appear probable or improbable, than are the appearances of evident propoſitions from the reaſons by which they appear evident. Wherefore if it be rational, and a perfection, to be determined by an evident appearance, it is no leſs ſo to be determined by a probable or improbable

* Le Clerc. Bibl. Choiſ. Tom. xii. p. 88, 89.

appear-

appearance; and conſequently an imperfection not to be ſo determined.

It is not only an abſurdity, and by conſequence an *imperfection*, not to be equally and neceſſarily determined in our reſpective judgments, by probable and improbable, as well as by evident appearances, which I have juſt now proved; but even not to be neceſſarily determined by probable appearances, would be a *greater imperfection*, than not to be neceſſarily determined by evident appearances: becauſe almoſt all our actions are founded on the probable appearances of things, and few on the evident appearance of things. And therefore, if we could judge that what appears probable, is not probable, but improbable or falſe; we ſhould be without the beſt rule of action and aſſent, we can have.

2. Were *liberty* defined, *a power to overcome our reaſon by the force of choice*, as a celebrated author may be ſuppoſed to mean, when he ſays*, *the will ſeems to have ſo great a power over the underſtanding being over-ruled by the election of the will, not only takes what is good to be evil, but is alſo compelled to admit what is falſe to be true*; man would, with the exerciſe of ſuch *a power*, be the moſt irrational and inconſiſt-

* King de Orig. Mali. p. 131.

ent

ent being, and by conſequence, the moſt *imperfect* underſtanding being, which can be conceived. For what can be more irrational and inconſiſtent, than to be able to refuſe our aſſent to what is evidently true to us, and to aſſent to what we ſee to be evidently falſe, and thereby inwardly give the lye to the underſtanding?

3. * Were *liberty* defined, *a power to will evil* (knowing it to be evil) *as well as good*; that would be an imperfection in man, conſidered as a ſenſible being, if it be an imperfection in ſuch a being to be miſerable. For *willing evil*, is chuſing to be miſerable, and bringing knowingly deſtruction on ourſelves. Men are already ſufficiently unhappy, by their ſeveral volitions; founded on the wrong uſe of their faculties, and on the miſtaken appearances of things. But what miſerable beings would they be, if inſtead of chuſing evil under the appearance of good (which is the only caſe wherein men now chuſe evil) they were indifferent to good and evil, and had the power to chuſe *evil as evil*, and did actually chuſe *evil as evil* in virtue of that power? They would, in ſuch a ſtate, or with ſuch a liberty, be like infants that cannot walk, left to go alone, with liberty to fall: or like children, with knives in their hands: or laſtly, like

* Cheyne's Phil. Prin. c. 3. ſ. 13.

young

young rope-dancers, left to themſelves, on their firſt eſſays upon the rope, without any one to catch them if they fall. And this miſerable ſtate following from the ſuppoſition of *liberty*, is ſo viſible to ſome of the greateſt advocates thereof*, that they acknowledge, that † *created beings, when in a ſtate of happineſs, ceaſe to have liberty* (that is, ceaſe to have liberty to chuſe evil) *being invoilably attached to their duty by the actual enjoyment of their felicity.*

4. Were *liberty* defined, as it is by ſome, *a power to will or chuſe at the ſame time any one out of two or more indifferent things*; that would be no perfection. For thoſe things called here *indifferent* or alike, may be conſidered, either as really different from each other, and that only ſeem indifferent or alike to us through our want of diſcernment; or as exactly like each other. Now the more *liberty* we have in the firſt kind, that is, the more inſtances there are of things which ſeem alike to us, and are not alike, the more miſtakes and wrong choices we muſt run into. For if we had juſt notions, we ſhould know thoſe things were not indifferent or alike. This *liberty* therefore would be founded on a direct imperfection of our faculties. And as to a *power of chuſing* differently at the ſame time among *things, really indiffer-*

* Bibl. Choiſie. Tom. xii. p. 95.
† Bramhall's Works, p. 655.

ent;

ent; what benefit, what perfection would ſuch a power of chuſing be, when the things that are the ſole objects of our *free choice* are all alike?

5. Laſtly, a celebr ed author ſeems to underſtand by liberty, *a faculty, which being indifferent to objects, and over-ruling our paſſions, appetites, ſenſations, and reaſon, chuſes arbitrarily among objects; and renders the object choſen agreeable, only becauſe it has choſen it.*

My deſign here is to conſider this definition, with the ſame view, that I have conſidered the ſeveral foregoing definitions, *viz.* to ſhow, that *liberty, inconſiſtent with neceſſity*, however deſcribed or defined, is an *imperfection*. Referring therefore my reader for a confutation of this *new* notion of *liberty* to the other parts of my book, wherein I have already proved, that the exiſtence of ſuch an *arbitrary faculty* is contrary to experience, and impoſſible; that our *paſſions, appetites, ſenſations*, and *reaſon*, determine us in our ſeveral choices; and that we chuſe objects becauſe they pleaſe us, and not, as the author pretends, that *objects pleaſe us only becauſe we chuſe them:* I proceed to ſhew the *imperfection* of this laſt kind of *liberty*.

1. Firſt, the pleaſure or happineſs accruing from the *liberty* here aſſerted is leſs than accrues from the *hypotheſis* of *neceſſity*.

All

All the pleaſure and happineſs ſaid to attend this pretended *liberty* conſiſts * *wholly* in † *creating* pleaſure and happineſs by *chuſing objects*.

Now man, conſidered as an intelligent neceſſary agent, would no leſs *create* this pleaſure and happineſs to himſelf by *chuſing objects*; than a being indued with the ſaid *faculty*: if it be true in fact, that *things pleaſe us, becauſe we chuſe them.*

But man, as an intelligent neceſſary agent, has theſe further pleaſures and advantages. He, by not being indifferent to objects, is moved by the goodneſs and agreeableneſs of them, as they appear to him, and as he knows them by reflection and experience. It is not in his power to be indifferent to what cauſes pleaſure or pain. He cannot reſiſt the pleaſure ariſing from the uſe of his paſſions, appetites, ſenſes, and reaſon: and if he ſuſpends his choice of an object, that is preſented to him, by any of theſe powers as agreeable; it is, becauſe he doubts or examines, whether upon the whole the object would make him happy; and becauſe he would gratify all theſe powers in the beſt manner he is able, or at leaſt ſuch of theſe powers as he conceives tend moſt to his happineſs. If he makes a

* Page 107, 108. † Page 107.

choice which proves diſagreeable, he gets thereby an experience, which may qualify him to chuſe the next time with more ſatisfaction to himſelf. And thus wrong choices may turn to his advantage for the future. So that, at all times, and under all circumſtances, he is purſuing and enjoying the greateſt happineſs, which his condition will allow.

It may not be improper to obſerve, that ſome of the pleaſures he receives from objects, are ſo far from being the effect of *choice*, that they are not the effect of the leaſt premeditation, or any act of his own, as in finding a treaſure on the road, or in receiving a legacy from a perſon unknown to him.

2. Secondly, this *arbitrary** *faculty* would ſubject a man to more *wrong choices*, than if he was determined in his choice.

A man determined in his choice by the appearing nature of things, and the uſage of his intellectual powers, never makes a wrong choice, but by miſtaking the true relation of things to him. But a being, indifferent to † *all objects*, and ſwayed by no motives in his choice of objects, chuſes at a venture; and

* Bramhall's Works, p. 147, to 150. † Page 106. 111.

only makes a right choice, when **it happens* (as the author juſtly expreſſes his notion) that he chuſes *an object*, which he can by his *creating* power render ſo agreeable, as that it may be called a *rightly choſen object*. Nor can this faculty be improved by any experience: but muſt ever continue to chuſe at a venture, or as *it happens*. For if this *faculty*, improves by experience, and will have regard to the agreeableneſs or diſagreeableneſs of objects in themſelves; it is no longer the *faculty* contended for, but a *faculty* moved and affected by the nature of things.

So that man, with a *faculty* of choice indifferent to all objects, muſt make more *wrong choices*, than man conſidered as a neceſſary being; in the ſame proportion, as *acting as it happens*, is a worſe direction to chuſe right, than the uſe of our ſenſes, experience, and reaſon.

3. Thirdly, the exiſtence of ſuch an *arbitrary faculty*, to chuſe without regard to the qualities of objects, would deſtroy the uſe of our ſenſes, appetites, paſſions, and reaſon; which have been given us to direct us in our enquiries after truth, in our purſuit after happineſs, and to preſerve our beings. For, if we had *a faculty*, which choſe without regard to the

* Page 10. V. 107, 113, 139, 141, 147.

notices

notices and advertiſements of theſe powers, and by its choice over-ruled them; we ſhould then be endued with *a faculty* to defeat the end and uſes of theſe powers.

The Perfection of neceſſity.

But the *imperfection* of liberty inconſiſtent with neceſſity, will yet more appear by conſidering the great *perfection* of being neceſſarily determined.

Can any thing be perfect, that is not neceſſarily perfect? For whatever is not neceſſarily perfect may be imperfect, and is by conſequence imperfect.

Is it not a perfection in God neceſſarily to know all truth?

Is it not a perfection in him to be neceſſarily happy?

Is it not alſo a perfection in him to will and do always what is beſt? For if all things are *indifferent* to him, as ſome of the * advocates of liberty aſſert, and become *good* only by his *willing* them; he cannot have any motive from his own ideas, or from the nature of things, to *will* one thing rather than another;

* King de orig. mali. p. 177.

and conſequently he muſt *will* without any reaſon or cauſe; which cannot be conceived poſſible of any being; and is contrary to this ſelf-evident truth, that *whatever has a beginning muſt have a cauſe.* But if things are not *indifferent* to him, he muſt be neceſſarily determined by what is beſt. Beſides, as he is a wiſe being, he muſt have ſome end and deſign: and as he is a good being, things cannot be *indifferent* to him, when the happineſs of intelligent and ſenſible beings, depend on the will he has, in the formation of things. With what conſiſtency therefore can thoſe advocates of liberty aſſert GOD to be *a holy and good being*, who maintain that *all things are indifferent* to him before he wills any thing; and that he may will, and do *all things*, which they themſelves eſteem wicked and unjuſt?

I cannot give a better confirmation of this argument, from the conſideration of the Attributes of GOD, than by the judgment of the late Biſhop of SARUM; which has the more weight, as proceeding from a great aſſerter of liberty, who by the force of truth is driven to ſay what he does. He grants, that *infinite perfection excludes ſucceſſive thoughts in God*; and *therefore* that **the Eſſence of God is one perfect*

* Expoſ. p. 26, 27.

thought,

thought, in which he views and wills all things. And though his tranſient acts, ſuch as creation, providence, and miracles, are done in a ſucceſſion of time; yet his immanent acts, his knowledge and decrees, are one with his eſſence. And as he grants this to be a true notion of GOD, ſo he allows that *a vaſt difficulty ariſes* from it againſt the liberty of GOD. *For*, ſays he, *the* immanent *acts of God being ſuppoſed free, it is not eaſy to imagine how they ſhould be one with the divine eſſence; to which, neceſſary exiſtence does moſt certainly belong.* And *if the* immanent *acts of God are neceſſary, then the tranſient muſt be ſo likewiſe, as being the certain effects of his immanent acts:* and *a chain of neceſſary fate muſt run through the whole order of things: and God himſelf then is no free being, but acts by a neceſſity of nature.* And *this* neceſſity, to which GOD is thus ſubject, *is*, adds he, *no abſurdity to ſome.* GOD *is*, according to them, *neceſſarily juſt, true, and good, by an intrinſic neceſſity that ariſes from his own infinite perfection.* And *from hence* they have *thought, that ſince God acts by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, things could not have been otherwiſe than they are: for what is infinitely wiſe or good cannot be altered, or made either better or worſe.* And he concludes, that he *muſt leave this difficulty without pretending to explain it, or anſwer the objections that ariſe againſt all the ſeveral ways by which divines have endeavoured to reſolve it.*

*Again, are not Angels and other heavenly beings eſteemed more perfect than men; becauſe, having a clear inſight into the nature of things, they are neceſſarily determined to judge right in relation to truth and falſhood, and to chuſe right in relation to good and evil, pleaſure and pain; and alſo to act right in purſuance of their judgment and choice? And therefore would not man be more perfect than he is, if, by having a clear inſight into the nature of things, he was neceſſarily determined to aſſent to truth only, to chuſe only ſuch objects as would make him happy, and to act accordingly?

Further, is not man more perfect, the more capable he is of conviction? And will he not be more capable of conviction, if he be neceſſarily determined in his aſſent by what ſeems a reaſon to him, and neceſſarily determined in his ſeveral volitions by what ſeems good to him; than if he was indifferent to propoſitions, notwithſtanding any reaſon for them, or was indifferent to any objects, notwithſtanding they ſeemed good to him? for otherwiſe, he could be convinced upon no other principles, and would be the moſt undiſciplinable and untractable of all animals. All advice and all reaſonings would be of no

* Bramhall's Works, p. 656, and 695.

uſe

uſe to him. You might offer arguments to him, and lay before him pleaſure and pain; and he might ſtand unmoved like a rock. He might reject what appears true to him, aſſent to what ſeems abſurd to him, avoid what he ſees to be good, and chuſe what he ſees to be evil. Indifference therefore to receive truth, that is *liberty* to deny it when we ſee it; and indifference to pleaſure and pain, that is, *liberty* to refuſe the firſt, and chuſe the laſt, are direct obſtacles to knowledge and happineſs. On the contrary, to be neceſſarily determined by what ſeems reaſonable, and by what ſeems good, has a direct tendency to promote truth and happineſs, and is the proper perfection of an underſtanding and ſenſible being. And indeed it ſeems ſtrange that men ſhould allow that GOD and angels act more perfectly becauſe they are determined by reaſon; and alſo allow, that clocks, watches, mills, and other artificial unintelligent beings are the better, the more they are determined to go right by weight and meaſure: and yet that they ſhould deem it a perfection in man not to be determined by his reaſon, but to have liberty to go againſt it. Would it not be as reaſonable to ſay, it would be a perfection in a clock not to be neceſſarily determined to go right, but to have its motions depend upon chance?

Again, though man does, through weakneſs and imperfection, fall into ſeveral miſtakes, both in judging and willing, in relation to what is true and good; yet he is ſtill leſs ignorant and leſs unhappy, by being neceſſarily determined in judging by what ſeems reaſonable, and in willing by what ſeems beſt, than if he was capable of judging contrary to his reaſon and willing againſt his ſenſes. For, were it not ſo, what *ſeems falſe*, would be as juſt *a rule of truth*; and what *ſeems evil*, as juſt *a rule of good*, as what *ſeems good*. Which are abſurdities too great for any to affirm; eſpecially if we conſider, that there is a perfectly wiſe and good Being, who has given men ſenſes and reaſon to conduct them.

Laſtly, it is a perfection to be neceſſarily determined in our choices, even in the moſt indifferent things: becauſe, if in ſuch caſes, there was not a cauſe of choice, but a choice could be made without a cauſe, then all choices might be made without a cauſe, and we ſhould not be neceſſarily determined by the greateſt evidence to aſſent to truth, nor by the ſtrongeſt inclination for happineſs to chuſe pleaſure and avoid pain; to all which it is a perfection to be neceſſarily determined. For if any action whatſoever, can be done without a cauſe, then effects and

cauſes

cauſes have no neceſſary relation, and by conſequence we ſhould not be neceſſarily determined in any caſe at all.

Fourth argument, taken from the conſideration of the divine preſcience.

IV. A fourth argument to prove man a neceſſary agent, ſhall be taken from the conſideration of the divine preſcience. The divine preſcience ſuppoſes, that all things future will certainly exiſt in ſuch time, ſuch order, and with ſuch circumſtances; and not otherwiſe. For if any things future were contigent, or uncertain, or depended on the liberty of man, that is, might or might not happen; their certain exiſtence could not be the object of the divine preſcience: it being a contradiction to know that to be certain, which is not certain: and God himſelf could only gueſs at the exiſtence of ſuch things. And if the divine preſcience ſuppoſes the *certain* exiſtence of all things future, it ſuppoſes alſo the *neceſſary* exiſtence of all things future; becauſe GOD can foreknow their certain exiſtence only, either as that exiſtence is the effect of his decree, or as it depends on its own cauſes. If he foreknows that exiſtence, as it is the effect of his decree; his decree makes that exiſtence neceſſary: for it implies a contradiction for an all-powerful being to decree any thing which ſhall

ſhall not neceſſarily come to paſs. If he foreknows that exiſtence, as it depends on its own cauſes; that exiſtence is no leſs neceſſary: for it no leſs implies a contradiction, that cauſes ſhould not produce their effects (cauſes and effects having a neceſſary relation to and dependence on each other) than that an event ſhould not come to paſs, which is decreed by God.

CICERO has ſome paſſages to the purpoſe of this argument. Says he*, *Qui poteſt provideri quidquam futurum eſſe quod neque cauſam habet ullam, neque notam, cur futurum ſit?—Quid eſt igitur, quod caſu fieri aut forte fortuna, putemus?—Nihil eſt enim tam contrarium rationi & conſtantia quam fortuna; ut mihi ne in Deum cadere videatur, ut ſciat, quid caſu & fortuito futurum ſit. Si enim ſcit, certe illud eveniet. Sin certe eveniet, nulla eſt fortuna. Eſt autem fortuna. Rerum igitur fortuitarum nulla eſt preſentio.* Alſo that illuſtrious Reformer LUTHER ſays, in his *treatiſe againſt free-will*†: *Conceſſa Dei præſcientia & omnipotentia, ſequitur naturaliter irrefragabili conſequentia, nos per nos ipſos non eſſe factos, nec vivere, nec agere quicquam, ſed per illius omnipotentiam. Cum autum tales nos ille ante præſcierit futuros, taleſque nunc faciat, moveat, & gubernet; quid poteſt fingi quæſo, quod in nobis liberum ſit, aliter & aliter fieri, quam ille præſcierit, aut nunc*

* De Divin. c. 2. † Cap. 147.

agat?

agat? Pugnat itaque ex diametro præſcientia & omnipotentia Dei cum noſtro libero arbitrio. Aut enim Deus falletur præſciendo, errabit & agendo (quod eſt impoſſibile) aut nos agemus & agemur ſecundum ipſius præſcientiam & actionem. And our learned Dr. SOUTH ſays*, *the fore-knowledge of an event does certainly and neceſſarily infer, that there muſt be ſuch an event; for as much as the certainty of knowledge depends upon the certainty of the thing known. And in this ſenſe it is, that God's decree and promiſe give a neceſſary exiſtence to the thing decreed or promiſed, that is to ſay, they infer it by infallible conſequence; ſo that it was as impoſſible for Chriſt not to riſe from the dead, as it was for God abſolutely to decree and promiſe a thing, and yet the thing not come to paſs.*

I could alſo bring in the greateſt divines and philoſophers † who are aſſerters of liberty, as confirming this argument; for ‡ they acknowledge, that they are unable to reconcile the ‖ *divine preſcience* and the *liberty* of man together: which is all I intended to prove by this argument, taken from the conſideration of the *divine preſcience.*

* Sermons, Vol. III. p. 488.

† See among others Carteſii Prin. Pars I. Art. 41. Locke's Letters, p. 27.

‡ Tillotſon's Sermons, V. VI. p. 157.

‖ Stillingfleet of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, p. 355.

Fifth

Fifth Argument, taken from the Nature of Rewards and Puniſhments.

V. A fifth argument to prove man a neceſſary agent, is as follows: If man was not a neceſſary agent, determined by pleaſure and pain, there would be no foundation for rewards and puniſhments, which are the * *eſſential ſupports* of ſociety.

For if men were not neceſſarily determined by pleaſure and pain, or if pleaſure and pain were no cauſes to determine men's wills; of what uſe would be the proſpect of rewards to frame a man's will to the obſervation of the law, or puniſhments to hinder his tranſgreſſion thereof? were pain, as ſuch, eligible, and pleaſure, as ſuch, avoidable; rewards and puniſhments could be no motives to a man, to make him do or forbear any action. But if pleaſure and pain have a neceſſary effect on men, and if it be impoſſible for men not to chuſe what ſeems good to them, and not to avoid what ſeems evil; the neceſſity of rewards and puniſhments is then evident, and rewards will be of uſe to all thoſe who conceive thoſe rewards to be pleaſure, and puniſhments will be of uſe to all thoſe who conceive them to be pain: and

* Solon rempublicam contineri dicebat duabus rebus, præmio & pœnâ, Cicero Epiſt. 15. ad Brutum.

rewards

rewards and puniſhments will frame thoſe men's wills to obſerve, and not tranſgreſs the laws.

Beſides, ſince there are ſo many robbers, murderers, whore-maſters, and other criminals, who notwithſtanding the puniſhments threatened, and rewards promiſed, by laws; prefer breaking the laws as the greater good, or leſſer evil, and reject conformity to them as the greater evil, or leſſer good: how many more would there be, and with what diſorders would not all ſocieties be filled, if rewards and puniſhments, conſidered as pleaſure and pain, did not determine ſome men's wills, but that, inſtead thereof, all men could prefer, or will, puniſhment conſidered as pain, and reject rewards conſidered as pleaſure? Men would then be under no reſtraints.

Sixth Argument, taken from the Nature of Morality.

VI. My ſixth and laſt argument to prove man a neceſſary agent is: if man was not a neceſſary agent determined by pleaſure and pain, he would have no notion of *morality*, or motive to practiſe it: the diſtinction between morality and immorality, virtue and vice would be loſt; and man would not be a moral agent.

Morality

*Morality or Virtue, conſiſts in ſuch actions as are in their own nature, and, upon the whole, *pleaſant*; and immorality or vice, conſiſts in ſuch actions as are in their own nature, and upon the whole, *painful*. Wherefore a man muſt be affected with pleaſure and pain, in order to know what morality is, and to diſtingniſh it from immorality. He muſt alſo be affected with pleaſure and pain, to have a reaſon to practiſe morality; for there can be no motives, but pleaſure and pain, to make a man do or forbear any action. And a man muſt be the more moral, the more he underſtands or is duly ſenſible, what actions give pleaſure and what pain; and muſt be perfectly moral, if neceſſarily determined by pleaſure and pain, rightly underſtood and apprehended. But if man be *indifferent* to pleaſure and pain, or is not duly affected with them; he cannot know what morality is, nor diſtinguiſh it from immorality, nor have any motive to practiſe morality, and abſtain from immorality; and will be equally indifferent to morality and immorality, or virtue and vice. Man in his preſent condition is ſufficiently immoral by miſtaking pain for pleaſure, and thereby judging, willing, and practiſing amiſs: but if he was indifferent to pleaſure and pain, he would have no rule to

* Locke's Eſſay of H. Un. l. ii. c. 20. Serjeant's Solid. Philoſ. aſſerted, p. 215.

go

go by, and might never judge, will, and practiſe right.

Though I conceive I have ſo propoſed my arguments, as to have obviated moſt of the plauſible objections uſually urged againſt the doctrine of neceſſity; yet it may not be improper to give a particular ſolution to the principal of them.

1. Firſt then it is objected, that **if men are neceſſary agents, and do commit neceſſarily all breaches of the law, it would be unjuſt to puniſh them for doing what they cannot avoid doing.*

To which I anſwer, that the ſole end of puniſhment in ſociety is to prevent, as far as may be, the commiſſion of *certain* crimes: and that puniſhments have their deſigned effect two ways; firſt, by reſtraining or cutting off from ſociety the *vicious* members; and ſecondly, by correcting men, or terrifying them from the commiſſion of thoſe crimes. Now let puniſhments be inflicted with either of theſe views, it will be manifeſt, that no regard is had to any *free-agency* in man, in order to render thoſe puniſhments juſt; but that on the contrary, puniſh-

* Auli Gellii noctes Att. l. 6. c. 2.

ments

ments may be *juſtly* inflicted on man, though a neceſſary agent. For, firſt, if *murderers* for example, or any ſuch *vicious* members are cut off from ſociety, merely as they are public nuiſances, and unfit to live among men; it is plain, they are in that caſe ſo far from being conſidered as *free-agents*, that they are cut off from ſociety as a cankered branch is from a tree, or as a mad dog is killed in the ſtreets. And the puniſhment of ſuch men is *juſt*, as it takes miſchievous members out of ſociety. Alſo, for the ſame reaſon, *furious madmen*, whom all allow to be neceſſary agents, are in many places of the world, either the objects of judicial puniſhments, or are allowed to be diſpatched by private men. Nay, even *men infected with the plague*, who are not voluntary agents, and are guilty of no crime, are ſometimes thought to be juſtly cut off from ſociety, to prevent contagion from them.

Secondly, let puniſhments be inflicted on ſome criminals with a view to terrify, it will appear that in inflicting puniſhments with that view, no regard is had to any *free-agency* in man, in order to make thoſe puniſhments *juſt*. To render the puniſhment of ſuch men *juſt*, it is ſufficient that they were *voluntary* agents, or had the will to do the crime for which they ſuffer; for the law very juſtly and rightly regardeth only the will, and no other

preceding

preceding cauſes of action. For example, ſuppoſe the law, on pain of death, forbids theft, and there be a man who, by the ſtrength of temptation, is neceſſitated to ſteal, and is thereupon put to death for it; doth not his puniſhment *deter* others from theft? Is it not a cauſe, that others ſteal not? doth it not frame their wills to juſtice? Whereas, a criminal who is an involuntary agent (as for inſtance, a man who has killed another in a chance medly, or while in a fever, or the like) cannot ſerve for an example to *deter* any others from doing the ſame; he being no more an intelligent agent in doing the crime than a houſe is, which kills a man by its fall: and by conſequence the puniſhment of ſuch an involuntary agent would be unjuſt. When therefore a man does a crime *voluntarily*, and his puniſhment will ſerve to deter others from doing the ſame, he *is juſtly puniſhed for doing what* (through ſtrength of temptation, ill habits, or other cauſes) *he could not avoid doing*.

It may not be improper to add this farther conſideration from the law of our country. There is one caſe, wherein our law is ſo far from requiring that the perſons puniſhed ſhould be *free agents*, that it does not conſider them as voluntary agents, or even as guilty of the crime for which they ſuffer: ſo little is *free-agency* requiſite to make puniſhments juſt. The children of rebel-parents ſuffer in their fortunes for

the guilt of their parents; and their puniſhment is deemed juſt, becauſe it is ſuppoſed to be a means to prevent rebellion in parents.

II. Secondly, it is objected, *that it is uſeleſs to threaten puniſhment, or inflict it on men to prevent crimes, when they are neceſſarily determined in all their actions.*

1. To which I anſwer firſt, that *threatening of puniſhments* is a cauſe which neceſſarily determines ſome men's wills to a conformtiy to law, and againſt committing the crimes to which puniſhments are annexed; and therefore is uſeful to all thoſe whoſe wills muſt be determined by it. It is as uſeful to ſuch men, as the ſun is to the ripening the fruits of the earth, or as any other cauſes are to produce their proper effects; and a man may as well ſay the ſun is uſeleſs, if the ripening the fruits of the earth be neceſſary, as ſay, there is no need of threatening puniſhment for the uſe of thoſe to whom threatening puniſhment is a neceſſary cauſe of forbearing to do a crime. It is alſo of uſe to ſociety to *inflict* puniſhments on men *for doing what they cannot avoid doing*, to the end that neceſſary cauſes may exiſt, to form the wills of thoſe who in virtue of them neceſſarily obſerve the laws; and alſo of uſe to cut them off as *noxious members* of ſociety.

2. But

2. But ſecondly, ſo far is threatening and inflicting puniſhments from being uſeleſs, if men are neceſſary agents, that it would be uſeleſs to *correct* and *deter* (which are the principal effects deſigned to be obtained by threatening and inflicting puniſhments) unleſs men were neceſſary agents, and were determined by pleaſure and pain; becauſe, if men were free, or indifferent to pleaſure and pain, pain could be no motive to cauſe men to obſerve the law.

3. Thirdly, men have every day examples before them of the uſefulneſs of puniſhments upon ſome intelligent or ſenſible beings, which they all contend are neceſſary agents. They puniſh dogs, horſes, and other animals every day with great ſucceſs, and make them leave off their vicious habits, and form them thereby according to their wills. Theſe are plain facts, and matters of conſtant experience, and even confirmed by the evaſions of the advocates of liberty, who call **the rewards and puniſhments* uſed to brute beaſts *analogical*; and ſay, that *beating them* and *giving them victuals*, *have* only *the ſhadow of rewards and puniſhments*. Nor are capital puniſhments without their uſe among beaſts and birds. RORARIUS† tells us, that *they crucify lions in* Africa *to drive*

* Bramhall's Works, p. 685.

† Quod bruta anim. &c. l. 2. p. 109,

away other lions from their cities and towns; and that *travelling through the country of* Juliers, he *obſerved they hanged up wolves to ſecure their flocks*. And in like manner with us, men hang up *crows* and *rooks* to keep birds from their corn, as they hang up murderers in chains to deter other murderers. But I need not go to brutes for examples of the uſefulneſs of puniſhments on neceſſary agents. Puniſhments are not without effect on *ſome idiots* and *madmen*, by reſtraining them to a certain degree; and they are the very means by which the minds of *children* are formed by their parents. Nay, puniſhments have plainly a better effect on *children*, than on grown perſons; and more eaſily form them to virtue and diſcipline, than they change the vicious habits of grown perſons, or plant new habits in them. Wherefore the objectors ought to think puniſhments may be threatened and inflicted on men uſefully, though they are neceſſary agents.

3. Thirdly, it is objected, *if men are neceſſary agents, it is of no uſe to repreſent reaſons to them, or to entreat them, or to admoniſh them, or to blame them, or to praiſe them.*

To which I anſwer, that all theſe, according to me, are neceſſary cauſes to determine certain men's wills

wills to do what we deſire of them; and are therefore uſeful, as acting on ſuch neceſſary agents to whom they are neceſſary cauſes of action; but would be of no uſe, if men had *free-will*, or their wills were not moved by them. So that they who make this objection muſt run into the abſurdities of ſaying, that *that cauſe is uſeful, which is no cauſe of action, and ſerves not to change the will*; and that *that cauſe is uſeleſs, which neceſſitates the effect.*

Let me add ſomething further in reſpect of praiſe. Men have at all times been praiſed for actions judged by all the world to be neceſſary. It has been a ſtanding method of commendation among the Epick Poets, who are the greateſt Panegyriſts of glorious actions, to attribute their hero's valour, and his great actions, to ſome deity preſent with him and aſſiſting. HOMER gives many of his heroes a god or a goddeſs to attend them in battle, or be ready to help them in diſtreſs. VIRGIL deſcribes ÆNEAS as always under the divine direction and aſſiſtance. And TASSO gives the Chriſtians in their holy war, divine aſſiſtance.

Orators alſo, and hiſtorians, think neceſſary actions the proper ſubjects of praiſe*. CICERO,

* Oratio pro Milone.

when he maintained, that the Gods inſpired MILO with the deſign and courage to kill CLODIUS, did not intend to leſſen the ſatisfaction or glory of MILO, but on the contrary to augment it. But can there be a finer commendation than that given by VELLEIUS PATERCULUS to CATO, that he *was good by nature, becauſe he could not be otherwiſe?* For, that alone is true goodneſs which flows from diſpoſition, whether that diſpoſition be natural or acquired. Such goodneſs may be depended on; and will ſeldom or ever fail. Whereas goodneſs founded on any reaſonings whatſoever, is a very precarious thing; as may be ſeen by the lives of the greateſt declaimers againſt vice, who, though they are conſtantly acquainting themſelves with all the topicks that can be drawn from the excellency of goodneſs or virtue, and the miſchiefs of vice; the rewards that attend the one, and the puniſhments that attend the other; yet are not better, than thoſe who are never converſant in ſuch topicks. Laſtly, the common proverb, *gaudeant bene nati*, is a general commendation of men for what plainly in no ſenſe depends on them.

IV. Fourthly, it is objected, that *if all events are neceſſary, then there is a period fixed to every man's life: and if there is a period fixed to every man's life, then it cannot be ſhortened by want of care or violence offered, or diſeaſes; nor can it be prolonged by care or phyſic:*

phyſic: and if it cannot be ſhortened or prolonged by them, then it is uſeleſs to avoid, or uſe, any of theſe things.

In anſwer to which, I grant, that if the period of human life be fixed (as I contend it is) it cannot but happen at the time fixed, and nothing can fall out to prolong or ſhorten that period. Neither ſuch want of care, nor ſuch violence offered, nor ſuch diſeaſes can happen, as can cauſe the period of human life to fall ſhort of that time; nor ſuch care, nor phyſic be uſed, as to prolong it beyond that time. But though theſe cannot ſo fall out, as to ſhorten or prolong the period of human life; yet being neceſſary cauſes in the chain of cauſes to bring human life to the period fixed, or to cauſe it not to exceed that time, they muſt as neceſſarily precede that effect, as other cauſes do their proper effects; and conſequently when uſed or neglected, ſerve all the ends and purpoſes, that can be hoped for, or feared, from the uſe of any means, or the neglect of any means whatſoever: For example, let it be fixed and neceſſary for the river *Nile* annually to overflow; the means to cauſe it to overflow, muſt no leſs neceſſarily precede. And as it would be abſurd to argue, that *if the overflowing of the* Nile *was annually fixed and neceſſary, it would overflow, though the neceſſary means to make it overflow did not precede*; ſo it is no

leſs abſurd to argue from the fixed period of human life, againſt the neceſſary means to bring it to its fixed period, or to cauſe it not to exceed that period.

5. Fifthly, it is aſked, *how a man can act againſt his conſcience, and how a man's conſcience can accuſe him, if he knows he acts neceſſarily, and alſo does what he thinks beſt when he commits any ſin.*

I reply, that conſcience being a man's own opinion of his actions with relation to ſome rule, he may at the time of doing an action contrary to that rule, know that he breaks that rule; and conſequently act with reluctance, though not ſufficient to hinder the action. But after the action is over, he may not only judge his action to be contrary to that rule; but by the abſence of the pleaſure of the ſin, and by finding himſelf obnoxious to ſhame, or by believing himſelf liable to puniſhment, he may *really accuſe himſelf*; that is, he may condemn himſelf for having done it, be ſorry he has done it, and wiſh it undone, becauſe of the conſequences that attend it.

6. Sixthly, it is objected, *that if all events are neceſſary, it was as impoſſible* (for example) *for* JULIUS CÆSAR

CÆSAR *not to have died in the Senate, as it is impoſſible for two and two to make ſix. But who will ſay the former was as impoſſible as the latter is, when we can conceive it poſſible for* JULIUS CÆSAR *to have died any where elſe as well as in the Senate, and impoſſible to conceive two and two ever to make ſix?*

To which I anſwer, that I do allow, *that if all events are neceſſary, it was as impoſſible for* JULIUS CÆSAR *not to have died in the Senate, as it is impoſſible for two and two to make ſix:* and will add, that it is no more poſſible to conceive the death of JULIUS CÆSAR to have happened any where elſe but in the Senate, than that two and two ſhould make ſix. For whoever does conceive his death poſſible any where elſe, ſuppoſes other circumſtances preceding his death than did precede his death. Whereas, let them ſuppoſe all the ſame circumſtances to come to paſs that did precede his death; and then it will be impoſſible to conceive (if they think juſtly) his death could have come to paſs any where elſe, as they conceive it impoſſible for two and two to make ſix. I obſerve alſo, that to ſuppoſe other circumſtances of any action poſſible, than thoſe that do precede it, is to ſuppoſe a contradiction or impoſſibility: for, as all actions have their particular circumſtances, ſo every circumſtance preceding an action, is as impoſſible not to have come to paſs, by virtue of the

cauſes

cauſes preceding that circumſtance, as that two and two ſhould make ſix.

The Opinions of the learned concerning Liberty, &c.

Having, as I hope, proved the truth of what I have advanced, and anſwered the moſt material objections that can be urged againſt me; it will, perhaps, not be improper to give ſome account of the ſentiments of the learned, in relation to my ſubject, and confirm, by *authority*, what I have ſaid, for the ſake of thoſe with whom *authority* has weight in matters of ſpeculation.

The queſtions of *liberty*, *neceſſity*, and *chance*, have been ſubjects of diſpute among philoſophers at all times; and moſt of thoſe philoſophers have clearly aſſerted *neceſſity*, and denied *liberty* and *chance*.

The queſtions of *liberty* and *neceſſity*, have alſo been debated among divines in the ſeveral ages of the chriſtian church, under the terms of *free-will* and *predeſtination:* and the divines who have denied *free-will* and aſſerted *predeſtination*, have enforced the arguments of the philoſopher, by the conſideration of ſome doctrines peculiar to the chriſtian religion. And as to *chance*, *hazard*, or *fortune*, I think, divines

vines unanimouſly agree, that thoſe words have no meaning.

Some chriſtian communions have even proceeded ſo far in relation to theſe matters, as to condemn in councils and ſynods the doctrine of *free-will* as heretical; and the denial thereof is become a part of the *Confeſſions of Faith*, and *Articles of Religion* of ſeveral churches.

From this ſtate of the fact, it is manifeſt, that whoever embraces the opinion I have maintained, cannot want the *authority* of as many learned and pious men, as in embracing the contrary.

But conſidering how little men are moved by the *authority* of thoſe who profeſſedly maintain opinions contrary to theirs, though, at the ſame time, they themſelves embrace no opinion but on the *authority* of ſome-body; I ſhall wave all the advantages that I might draw from the *authority* of ſuch philoſophers and divines, as are undoubtedly on my ſide: and for that reaſon ſhall not enter into a more particular detail of them; but ſhall offer the *authority* of ſuch men, who profeſs to maintain *liberty*. There are indeed very few real adverſaries to the opinion I defend among thoſe who pretend to be ſo; and upon due enquiry it will be found, that moſt of thoſe

thoſe who aſſert *liberty* in words, deny the thing, when the queſtion is rightly ſtated. For proof whereof, let any man examine the cleareſt and acuteſt authors who have written for *liberty*, or diſcourſe with thoſe who think *liberty* a matter of experience, and he will ſee, that they allow, that the *will follows the judgment of the underſtanding*; and *that, when two objects are preſented to a man's choice, one whereof appears better than the other, he cannot chooſe the worſt*; that is, cannot chooſe *evil* as *evil*. And ſince they acknowledge theſe things to be true, they yield up the queſtion of *liberty* to their adverſaries, who only contend, that the will, or choice, is always determined by what ſeems beſt. I will give my reader one example thereof in the moſt acute and ingenious Dr. CLARK, whoſe authority is equal to that of many others put together, and makes it needleſs to cite others after him. He aſſerts *, that *the will* is determined by *moral motives*, and calls the *neceſſity*, by which a man chooſes in virtue of thoſe motives, *moral neceſſity*. And he explains himſelf with his uſual candor and perſpicuity by the following inſtance. *A man*, ſays he, *entirely free from all pain of body and diſorder of mind, judges it unreaſonable for him to hurt or deſtroy himſelf; and being under no temptation or external violence, he* CANNOT

* Demonſtration of the Being and Attributes of God, p. 105 of the 4th edition, 1716.

POSSIBLY *act contrary to this judgment; not becauſe he wants a natural or phyſical power ſo to do, but becauſe it is abſurd and miſchievous, and morally impoſſible for him to chooſe to do it. Which alſo is the very ſame reaſon, why the moſt perfect rational creatures, ſuperior to men, cannot do evil; not becauſe they want a natural power to perform the material action, but becauſe it is morally impoſſible, that with a perfect knowledge of what is beſt, and without any temptation to evil, their will ſhould determine itſelf to chooſe to act fooliſhly and unreaſonably.*

In this he plainly allows the *neceſſity*, for which I have contended. For he aſſigns the ſame cauſes of human actions that I have done; and extends the *neceſſity* of human actions as far, when he aſſerts, that a man *cannot* under thoſe cauſes, *poſſibly do the contrary to what he does*; and particularly that *a man* under the circumſtances, of *judging it unreaſonable to to hurt or deſtroy himſelf, and being under no temptation or external violence, cannot poſſibly act contrary to that judgment.* And as to *a natural* or *phyſical power* in man *to act contrary to that judgment*, and to *hurt* or *deſtroy* himſelf, which is aſſerted in the foregoing paſſage; that is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with the doctrine of *neceſſity*, that the ſaid *natural power to do the contrary*, or *to hurt* or *deſtroy* himſelf, is a conſequence

conſequence of the doctrine of *neceſſity*. For, if man is *neceſſarily* determined by particular *moral cauſes*, and *cannot then poſſibly act contrary* to what he does; he muſt, under oppoſite *moral cauſes*, have *a power to do the contrary*. Man, as determined by *moral* cauſes, *cannot poſſibly* chooſe evil as evil, and by conſequence chooſes *life* before *death*, while he apprehends *life* to be *a good*, and *death* to be an *evil*; as, on the contrary, he chooſes *death* before *life*, while he apppehends *death* to be *a good* and *life* to be *an evil*. And thus *moral* cauſes, by being different from one another, or differently underſtood, do determine men differently; and by conſequence ſuppoſe *a natural power* to chooſe and act as differently, as thoſe cauſes differently determine them.

If therefore men will be governed by authority in the queſtions before us, let them ſum up the real aſſerters of the *liberty* of man, and they will find them not to be very numerous; but, on the contrary, they will find far the greater part of the pretended aſſerters of *liberty*, to be real aſſerters of *neceſſity*.

The Author's Notion of Liberty.

I ſhall conclude this diſcourſe with obſerving, that though I have contended, that *Liberty from Neceſſity* is contrary to experience; that it is impoſſible, and if

if poſſible, that it is imperfection, that it is inconſiſtent with the divine perfections; and that it is ſubverſive of laws and morality: yet, to prevent all objections to me, founded on the equivocal uſe of the word *liberty*, which, like all words employed in debates of conſequence, has various meanings affixed to it, I think myſelf obliged to declare my opinion, that I take *man* to have a truly valuable *liberty* of another kind. He has *a power to do as he wills or pleaſes.* Thus, if he wills, or pleaſes, to ſpeak, or be ſilent, to ſit or ſtand, to ride or walk, to go this way or that way, to move faſt or ſlow; or, in fine, if his will changes like a weather-cock, he is able to do as he wills or pleaſes, unleſs prevented by ſome reſtraint or compulſion, as by being gagged, being under an acute pain, being forced out of his place, being confined, having convulſive motions, having loſt the uſe of his limbs, or ſuch-like cauſes.

He has alſo the ſame power in relation to the actions of his mind, as to thoſe of his body. If he wills or pleaſes, he can think of this or that ſubject, ſtop ſhort, or purſue his thoughts, deliberate, or defer deliberation, or reſume deliberation, as he pleaſes, reſolve or ſuſpend his reſolution as he pleaſes, and, in fine, can every moment change his object when he pleaſes, unleſs prevented by pain, or a fit

of

of an apoplexy, or ſome ſuch intervening reſtraint and compulſion.

And is it not a great perfection in man to be able, in relation both to his thoughts and actions, to do as he wills or pleaſes, in all thoſe caſes of pleaſure and intereſt? Nay, can a greater and more beneficial power in man be conceived, than to be able to do as he wills or pleaſes? And can any other *liberty* be conceived beneficial to him? Had he this power or *liberty* in all things, he would be omnipotent!

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